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1801 F.

ST. LEON:

A

TALE

OF THE

IXTEENTH CENTURY.

By WILLIAM GODWIN.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

THE FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

ALEXANDRIA:

PRINTED BY J. & J. D. WESTCOTT.

1801.

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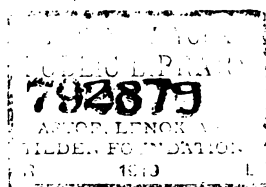
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P R E F A C E.

THE following passage from a work, said to be written by the late Dr. John Campbel, and entitled *HERMIPPUS REDIVIVUS*, suggested the first hint of the present performance.

“ There happened in the year 1687, an odd accident at Venice, that made a very great stir then, and which I think deserves to be rescued from oblivion. The great freedom and ease with which all persons, who make a good appearance, live in that city, is known sufficiently to all who are acquainted with it; such will not therefore be surprised, that a stranger, who went by the name of signor Gualdi, and who made a considerable figure there, was admitted into the best company, though no body knew who or what he was. He remained at Venice some months, and three things were remarked in his conduct. The first was, that he had a small collection of fine pictures, which he readily shewed to any body that desired it; the next, that he was perfectly versed in all arts and sciences, and spoke on every subject with such readiness and sagacity, as astonished all who heard him; and it was in the third place observed, that he never wrote or received any letter; never desired any credit, or made use of bills of exchange, but paid for every thing in ready money, and lived decently, though not in splendour.

“ This gentleman met one day at the coffee-house with a Venetian nobleman, who was an extraordinary good
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judge of pictures: he had heard of signor Gualdi's collections, and in a very polite manner desired to see them, to which the other very readily consented. After the Venetian had viewed signor Gualdi's collection, and expressed his satisfaction, by telling him, that he had never seen a finer, considering the number of pieces of which it consisted; he cast his eye by chance over the chamber-door, where hung a picture of this stranger. The Venetian looked upon it, and then upon him. This picture was drawn for you, sir, says he to signor Gualdi, to which the other made no answer, but by a low bow. You look, continued the Venetian, like a man of fifty, and yet I know this picture to be of the hand of Titian, who has been dead one hundred and thirty years, how is this possible? It is not easy, said signior Gualdi, gravely, to know all things that are possible; but there is certainly no crime in my being like a picture drawn by Titian. The Venetian easily perceived by his manner of speaking, that he had given the stranger offence, and therefore took his leave.

“ He could not forbear speaking of this in the evening to some of his friends, who resolved to satisfy themselves by looking upon the picture the next day. In order to have an opportunity of doing so, they went to the coffee-house about the time that signor Gualdi was wont to come thither, and not meeting with him, one of them who had often conversed with him, went to his lodgings to enquire after him, where he heard, that he had set out *an hour before* for Vienna. This affair made a great noise,

noise, and found a place in all the news-papers of that time."*

It is well known that the philosopher's stone, the art of transmuting metals into gold; and the elixir vitæ, which was to restore youth, and make him that possessed it immortal, formed a principal object of the studies of the curious for centuries. Many stories, beside this of signor Gualdi, have been told, of persons who were supposed to be in possession of those wonderful secrets, in the search of which hundreds of unfortunate adventurers wasted their fortunes and their lives.

It has been said of Shakespear, that he

"Exhausted worlds, and then imagin'd new;†"

but the burthen sustained by Shakespear was too heavy for the shoulders of any individual. I leave the first part of the task above mentioned to be divided among those celebrated novelists, living and dead, who have at-

* To this story, in the book from which I have quoted it, is subjoined the following reference, "Memoires historiques, 1687, tom. i. p. 365." Being desirous of giving my extract from the oldest authority, I caused the British Museum, and the libraries of Oxford and Cambridge to be searched for this publication, in vain. The story and the reference are, not improbably, both of them the fictions of the English writer.

† Johnson's occasional prologue on Garrick's assuming the management of Drury-lane Theatre.

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tempted to delineate the scenes of real life. In this little work I have endeavoured to gain footing in one neglected track of the latter province. The hearts and the curiosity of readers have been assailed in so many ways, that we, writers who bring up the rear of our illustrious predecessors, must be contented to arrive at novelty in whatever mode we are able. The foundation of the following tale is such, as, it is not to be supposed, ever existed. But, if I have mixed human feelings and passions with incredible situations, and thus rendered them impressive and interesting, I shall entertain some hope to be pardoned the boldness and irregularity of my design.

Some readers of my graver productions will perhaps, in perusing these little volumes, accuse me of inconsistency; the affections and charities of private life being every where in this publication a topic of the warmest eulogium, while in the Enquiry concerning Political Justice they seemed to be treated with no degree of indulgence and favour. In answer to this objection all I think it necessary to say on the present occasion, is, that for more than four years, I have been anxious for opportunity and leisure to modify some of the earlier chapters of that work in conformity to the sentiments inculcated in this. Not that I see cause to make any change respecting the principle of justice, or any thing else fundamental to the system there delivered; but that I apprehend domestic and private affections inseparable from the nature of man, and from what may be styled the culture of the heart, and am fully persuaded that they are not

incom-

PREFACE.



incompatible with a profound and active sense of justice in the mind of him that cherishes them. The way in which these seemingly jarring principles may be reconciled, is in part pointed out in a little book which I gave to the public in the year 1798, and which I will here therefore take the liberty to quote.

“ A sound morality requires that nothing human should be regarded by us as indifferent; but it is impossible we should not feel the strongest interest for those persons whom we know most intimately, and whose welfare and sympathies are united to our own. True wisdom will recommend to us individual attachments; for with them our minds are more thoroughly maintained in activity and life than they can be under the privation of them, and it is better that man should be a living being, than a stock or a stone. True virtue will sanction this recommendation; since it is the object of virtue to produce happiness, and since the man who lives in the midst of domestic relations, will have many opportunities of conferring pleasure, minute in the detail, yet not trivial in the amount, without interfering with the purposes of general benevolence. Nay, by kindling his sensibility, and harmonising his soul, they may be expected, if he is endowed with a liberal and manly spirit, to render him more prompt in the service of strangers and the public.”
Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Ch. VI. p. 90. II^d. Edition.

Nov. 26, 1799.

* * * For

* * For the sake of the unlearned reader, I subjoin the following illustration of the motto prefixed to these volumes.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was a Portuguese, born about the year 1510. Becoming a fugitive from his country at a very immature age, he travelled through many parts of Africa and Asia for twenty-one years, and, by his own account, passed through a surprising number of extraordinary and distressful adventures. The translation of his travels into French forms a very thick volume in quarto, and bears date in the year 1628,

VICISSITUDES DE LA FORTUNE, 12mo.
Tom. I. p. 1.



TRAVELS

OF

ST. LEON



CHAP. I.

THERE is nothing that human imagination can figure brilliant and enviable, that human genius and skill do not aspire to realize. In the early ages of antiquity, one of the favourite topics of speculation was a perfect system of civil policy; and no sooner had Plato delineated his imaginary republic, than he sought for a spot of earth upon which to execute his plan. In my own times, and for upwards of a century before them, the subject which has chiefly occupied men of intrepid and persevering study, has been the great secret of nature, the *OPUS MAGNUM*, in its two grand and inseparable branches, the art of multiplying gold, and of defying the inroads of infirmity and death.

It is notorious that uncommon talents and unparalleled industry have been engaged in this mighty task. It has, I know, been disputed by the audacious adversaries of all sober and reasonable evidence, whether these talents and industry have in any case attained the object they sought: It is not to my purpose to ascertain the number of those whose victory over the powers and inertness of matter has been complete. It is enough that I am
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a living instance of such men. To these two secrets, if they are to be considered as two, I have been for years in the habit of resorting for my gratification. I have in my possession the choice of being as wealthy as I please, and the gift of immortal life. Every thing that I see almost, I can without difficulty make my own; for what palaces, pictures, parks, or gardens, rarities of art or nature, have not a price at which their owner will consent to yield them? The luxuries of every quarter of the world are emptied at my feet. What heart can withstand the assault of princely magnificence? What man is inaccessible to a bribe? Add to these advantages, that I am invulnerable to disease. Every sun that rises, finds the circulations of my frame in the most perfect order. Decrepitude can never approach me. A thousand winters want the power to furrow my countenance with wrinkles, or turn my hairs to silver. Exhaustless wealth and eternal youth, are the attributes by which I am distinguished from the rest of mankind.

I do not sit down now to write a treatise of natural philosophy. The condition by which I hold my privileges is, that they must never be imparted. I sit down purely to relate a few of those extraordinary events that have been produced in the period of my life which is already elapsed, by the circumstances and peculiarity to which I have just alluded.

It is so obvious, as to make it almost improper to specify it, that the pursuit in which so many of my contemporaries are engaged, and the end of which I have so singularly atchieved, is in its appearance infinitely more grand and interesting, than that which occupied the thoughts of Plato and the most eminent writers of antiquity. What is political liberty, compared with unbounded riches and immortal vigour? The immediate application of political liberty is, to render a man's patrimony *or the fruits of his industry* completely his own, and to preserve

preserve them from the invasion of others. But the petty detail of preservation or gradual acquisition, can never enter into competition with the great secret, which can endow a man in a moment with every thing that the human heart can wish. Considered in this light, how mean and contemptible does the ambition of the boasted ancients appear, compared with ours! What adept or probationer of the present day would be content to resign the study of God and the profounder secrets of nature; and to bound his ardour to the investigation of his own miserable existence?

It may seem perhaps to many, that the history of a person possessed of advantages so unparalleled as mine must be like the history of paradise, or of the future happiness of the blessed, too calm and motionless, too much of one invariable texture and exempt from vicissitude, to excite the attention or interest the passions of the reader. If he will have patience; and apply to the perusal of my narrative; he will in no long time perceive how far his conjecture is founded in sagacity and reason.

Some persons may be curious to know what motives can have induced a man of such enormous wealth, and so every way qualified to revel in delights, to take the trouble of penning his memoirs. The immortality with which I am endowed seems to put out of the question the common motives that relate to posthumous fame.

The curiosity here mentioned, if it really exists, I cannot consent to gratify. I will anticipate nothing. In the progress of my story, my motive for recording it will probably become evident.

I am descended from one of the most ancient and honourable families of the kingdom of France. I was the only child of my father, who died while I was an infant. My mother was a woman of rather a masculine understanding, and full of the prejudices of nobility and magnificence. Her whole soul was in a manner conce

trated in the ambition to render me the worthy successor of the counts de St. Leon, who had figured with distinguished reputation in the wars of the Holy Land. My father had died fighting gallantly in the plains of Italy under the standard of Louis the Twelfth; a prince whose name was never repeated to me, unaccompanied with the praises due to his military prowess, and to the singular humanity of disposition by which he acquired the title of The father of his people. My mother's mind was inflamed with the greatness of my ancestors, and she indefatigably sought to kindle in my bosom a similar flame. It had been a long-established custom for the barons and feudal vassals of the kings of France to enter with great personal expence into the brilliant and dazzling expeditions of their sovereigns; and my father greatly impaired his fortune in preparations for that very campaign in which he terminated his life. My mother industriously applied herself to the restoration of my patrimony; and the long period of my minority afforded her scope for that purpose.

It was impossible for any boy to be treated with more kindness and considerate indulgence, than I was during the period of my adolescence. My mother loved me to the very utmost limits perhaps of human affection. I was her darling and her pride, her waking study, and her nightly dream. Yet I was not pampered into corporeal imbecility, or suffered to rust in inactivity of mind. I was provided with the best masters. I was excited, and successfully excited, zealously to apply myself to the lessons they taught. I became intimately acquainted with the Italian writers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. I was initiated in the study of the classics, to the cultivation of which the revival of letters at this time gave particular ardour. I was instructed in the principles of the fine arts. There was no species of accom-

plishment

plishment at that time in vogue, that my mother was not anxious I should make my own. The only science I neglected, was the very science which has since given rise to the most extraordinary events of my life. But the object to which my attention was principally called, was the pursuit of military exercises, and the cultivation of every thing that could add to the strength, agility or grace of my body, and to the adventurousness and enterprize of my mind. My mother loved my honour and my fame, more than she loved my person.

A circumstance that tended perhaps more than any other to fix the yet fluctuating character of my youthful mind, was my being present as a spectator at the celebrated meeting between Francis the First, and Henry the Eighth, king of England, in a field between Ardres and Guines. My mother refused to accompany me, being already arrived at an age in which curiosity and the love of festive scenes are usually diminished, and the expences incurred by all the nobility who attended upon this scene being incompatible with the economy to which she rigidly adhered. I was therefore placed under the protection of the marquis de Villeroy, her brother, and, with two servants who attended me, formed a part of his suite.

I was at this time fifteen years of age. My contemplations had been familiar with ideas of magnificence and grandeur, but my life had been spent in the most sequestered retirement. This contrast had a particular effect upon my disposition; it irritated to a very high degree my passion for splendour and distinction; I lived in the fairy fields of visionary greatness, and was more than indifferent to the major part of the objects around me. I pined for every thing the reverse of my present condition; I cultivated the exercises in which I was engaged, only as they were calculated to prepare me for future achievements.

By the incident I have mentioned, I was transported at once from a scene of modest obscurity, to a scene of the most lavish splendour that the world perhaps ever contemplated. I never remembered to have seen even Paris itself. The prevailing taste of Europe has for some time led very much to costliness in dress. This taste, in its present profusion, I believe took its rise in the field of the Vale of Ardres. The two kings were both in the vigour of their youth, and were said to be the handsomest men of the age in which they lived. The beauty of Henry was sturdy and muscular; that of Francis more refined and elegant, without subtracting in any considerable degree from the firmness of his make. Henry was four years older than his brother monarch. The first of them might have been taken as a model to represent a youthful Hercules, and the last an Apollo.

The splendour of dress that was worn upon this occasion, exceeds almost all credibility. Every person of distinction might be said in a manner to carry an estate upon his shoulders; nor was the variety of garments inferior to the richness. Wolsey, a man whose magnificence of disposition was only surpassed by the pride of his soul, was for the most part the director of the whole. He possessed the most absolute ascendancy over the mind of his master, at the same time that Francis artfully indulged his caprice, that he might claim from him in return a similar indulgence in weightier matters.

The pomp of processions, and the ceremony of opening this memorable festival, went first; a sort of solemn and half-moving pageant, which the eye took in at leisure, and took in till it was filled. This was succeeded by every thing that was rapid, animated and interesting: masques and exhibitions of all kinds; and, which was still more to me, and which my soul devoured with indescribable ardour, justings, tilts and tournaments without end. *The beauty of the armour, the caparisons of the steeds,*
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the mettle of the animals themselves, and the ardour and grace of the combatants, surpassed every thing that my fancy had ever painted. These scenes were acted in the midst of a vast amphitheatre of spectators, where all that was noble and eminent of either country was assembled, the manliness of aspiring youth, and the boundless varieties of female attraction. All were in their gayest attire; every eye was lighted up with complacency and joy. If Heraclitus, or any other morose philosopher who has expatiated on the universal misery of mankind, had entered the field of Ardres, he must have retracted his assertions, or fled from the scene with confusion. The kings were placed at either end of the lists, surrounded with their courtiers. Every eye through this vast assembly was fixed upon the combatants; the body of every one present was inclined this way or that, in unconscious sympathy with the redoubted knights. From time to time, as the favourites of either party prevailed, the air was rent with shouts and acclamations.

What added to the fascination of all that I have yet mentioned, was that now, for the first time in an equal degree perhaps for centuries, the stiffness of unwieldy form was laid aside, and the heart of man expanded itself with generosity and confidence. It burst the fetters of ages; and, having burst them, it seemed to revel in its new-found liberty. It is well known that, after a few days of idle precaution and specious imprisonment on both sides, Francis one morning mounted his horse, and appeared, without guards or any previous notice, before the tent of Henry. The example was contagious, and from this time all ceremony was laid aside. The kings themselves entered personally into the combats of their subjects. It was a delightful and ravishing spectacle, to witness the freedom of the old Roman manners, almost of the old Roman Saturnalia, polished and refined with all that was graceful and humane in the age of chivalry.

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It may easily be imagined what an effect a scene like this was calculated to produce upon a youth of my age and my education. I recollected with anguish that the immaturity of my years precluded me from taking an active part in the spectacle. My appearance however, was sufficiently advantageous. I was presented to Francis the First. He did me the honour to question me respecting my studies; and, finding in me some knowledge of those arts and that literature, of which he was himself so zealous a favourer, he expressed to my uncle a great satisfaction with my figure and acquisitions. I might from this time have been taken to court, and made one of the pages to this illustrious monarch. But the plan of my mother was different. She did not wish for the present that my eye should be satiated with public scenes, or that the public should grow too familiarly acquainted with my person. She rightly judged that my passion for the theatre of glory would grow more impetuous, by being withheld for some time from the gratifications for which it panted. She wished that I should present myself for the first time among the nobility of France an accomplished cavalier, and not suffer the disadvantage of having exposed in the eye of the world those false steps and fraikties, from which the inexperience of youth is never entirely free. These motives being explained to the king, he was graciously pleased to sanction them with his approbation. I accordingly returned to finish the course of my education at my paternal chateau upon the banks of the Garonne.

The state of my mind during the three succeeding years, amply justified the sagacity of my mother. I was more eager for improvement than I had ever yet been. I had before formed some conceptions of the career of honour, from the books I had read, and from the conversation of this excellent matron. But my reveries were *impotent and little*, compared with what I had now seen.

Like

Like the author of our holy religion, I had spent my forty days without food in the wilderness, when suddenly my eyes were opened, and I was presented with all the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory of them. The fairy scene continued for a moment, and then vanished; leaving nothing behind it on all sides but the same barrenness and gloom by which it had been preceded. I never shut my eyes without viewing in imagination the combats of knights and the train of ladies. I had been regarded with distinction by my sovereign; and Francis the First stood before my mind the abstract and model of perfection and greatness. I congratulated myself upon being born in an age and country so favourable to the acquisition of all that my soul required.

I was already eighteen years of age, when I experienced the first misfortune that ever befel me. It was the death of my mother. She felt the approach of her dissolution several weeks before it arrived, and held repeated conversations with me, respecting the feelings I ought to entertain, and the conduct it would become me to pursue, when she should be no more.

"My son," said she, "your character, and the promise of your early years, have constituted my only consolation since the death of your excellent father. Our marriage was the result of a most sincere and exclusive attachment, and never did man more deserve to be loved than Reginald de St. Leon. When he died the whole world would have been nothing to me but one vast blank, if he had not left behind him the representative of his person, and the heir to his virtues. While I was busied in your education, I seemed to be discharging the last duty to the memory of my husband. The occupation was sacred to the honour of the dead, even before it became so peculiarly pleasing to me upon its own account as I afterwards found it. I hope I have in some measure discharged the task in the manner in which my lord your father

father would have wished it to have been discharged if he had lived. I am thankful to heaven that I have been spared so long for so dear and honourable a purpose.

"You must now, my son, stand by yourself, and be the arbitrator of your own actions. I could have wished that this necessity might have been a little further deferred; but I trust your education has not been of that sort which is calculated to render a young man helpless and contemptible. You have been taught to know your rank in society, and to respect yourself. You have been instructed in every thing that might most effectually forward you in the career of glory. There is not a young cavalier among all the nobility of France more accomplished, or that promises to do greater honour to his name and his country. I shall not live to witness the performance of this promise, but the anticipation even now, pours a long stream of sunshine on my departing hour.

"Farewel, my son! You stand no longer in need of my maternal care. When I am gone, you will be compelled more vividly to feel that singleness and self-dependence which are the source of all virtue. Be careful of yourself. Be careful that your career may be both spotless and illustrious. Hold your life as a thing of no account when it enters into competition with your fame. A true knight thinks no sacrifice and suffering hard that honour demands. Be humane, gentle, generous and intrepid, be prompt to follow wherever your duty calls you. Remember your ancestors, knights of the Holy Cross. Remember your father. Follow your king, who is the mirror of valour; and be ever ready for the service of the distressed. May providence be your guardian. May heaven shower down a thousand blessings upon your innocence and the gallantry of your soul!"

The death of my mother was a severe blow to my heart. For some time all the visions of greatness and
renown

renown which had hitherto been my chosen delight, appeared distasteful to me. I hung over her insensible corpse. When it had been committed to the earth, I repaired every day to the spot where it was deposited, at the hour of dusk, when all visible objects faded from the eye, when nature assumed her saddest tints, and the world seemed about to be wrapped in the darkness of the tomb. The dew of night drizzled unheeded on my head; and I did not turn again towards the turrets of the chateau, till the hour of midnight had already sounded through the stilness of the scene.

Time is the healer of almost every grief, particularly in the sprightly season of early youth. In no long period I changed the oppression of inactive sorrow, for the affectionate and pious recollection of my mother's last instructions. I had been too deeply imbued with sentiments of glory, for it to be possible, when the first excess of grief was over, that I should remain in indolence. The tender remembrance of my mother itself, in no long time, furnished a new stimulus to my ambition. I forgot the melancholy spectacle of the last struggles of her expiring life; I even became accustomed no longer to hear her voice, no longer to expect her presence, when I returned to the chateau from a short excursion. Her last advice was now all that survived of the author of my existence.

CHAP. II.

I WAS in this state of mind, when, early one morning in the beginning of summer, soon after I rose, I was startled by the sound of trumpets in the plain near the chateau. The bugle at the gate was presently sounded; the drawbridge was let down; and the mar-
Vol. I. C quia

quis de Villeroy entered the court-yard, accompanied by about thirty knights in complete armour. I saluted him with respect, and the tenderness excited by recent grief. He took me by the hand, after a short repast in the hall, and led me to my closet.

"My son," said he, "it is time to throw off the effeminacy of sorrow, and to prove yourself a true soldier of the standard of France."

"I trust, my lord," replied I, with modest earnestness, "that you well know, there is nothing after which my heart so ardently aspires. There is nothing that I know worth living for, but honour. Show me the path that leads to it, or rather show me the occasion that affords scope for the love of honour to display itself, and you shall then see whether I am backward to embrace it. I have a passion pent within me, that feeds upon my vitals. It disdains speech; it burns for something more unambiguous and substantial."

"It is well," rejoined my uncle. "I expected to find you thus. Your reply to my admonition is worthy of the blood of your ancestors, and of the maternal instructions of my sister. And, were you as dull as the very stones you tread on, what I have to tell you, might even then rouse you into animation and ardour."

After this short preface my uncle proceeded to relate a tale, every word of which inflamed my spirits, and raised all my passions in arms. I had heard something imperfectly of the state of my country; but my mother carefully kept me in ignorance, that my ambition might not be excited too soon, and that, when excited, it might be with the fullest effect. While I impatiently longed for an occasion of glory, I was far from apprehending, what I now found to be true, that the occasion which at this period presented itself, was such, that all the licence of fiction could scarcely have improved it.

The marquis de Villeroy described to me the league

now subsisting against France. He revived in my memory by terms of the most fervent loyalty, the accomplishments and talents of my royal master. He spoke with aversion of the phlegmatic and crafty disposition of his imperial rival;* and, with the language of glowing indignation, inveighed against the fickleness of the capricious Henry †. He described the train of disasters which had at length induced the king to take the field in person. He contrasted, with great effect, the story of the gallant chevalier Bayard, the knight without fear and without reproach, whose blood was still fresh in the plains of the Milanese; with that of the constable of Bourbon, the stain of chivalry, whom inglorious resentment and ungoverned ambition had urged to join the enemies of his country, in neglect of his loyalty and his oath. He stimulated me by the example of the one, and the infamy of the other; and assured me that there never was an opportunity more favourable for acquiring immortal renown.

I wanted no prompter in a passion of this sort; and immediately set about collecting the whole force of my clients and retainers. I shook off the inglorious softness of my melancholy, and was all activity and animation. The lessons of my youth were now called into play. I judged it necessary to invite the assistance of some person of experience to assist me in marshalling my men; but I did much of what was to be done myself, and I did it well. It was my first employment in the morning; and the last that was witnessed by the setting sun. My excellent mother had left my revenues in the best order, and I spared no expence in the gratification of my favourite passion.

However eager I felt myself to take the field, the desire to appear in a manner worthy of a count de St. Leon

* Charles V.

† Henry VIII.

restrained.

restrained me ; and I did not join the royal army till the Imperialists, having broken up the siege of Marseilles, and retreated with precipitation into Italy, the king had already crossed the Alps, entered the Milanese, and gained uncontested possession of the capital.

From Milan Francis proceeded to Pavia. Glory was the idol of his heart ; and he was the more powerfully excited to the attack of that place, because it was the strongest and best fortified post in the whole dutchy. The more he displayed of military prowess, the more firmly he believed he should fix himself in his newly acquired dominions ; the inhabitants would submit to him the more willingly, and the enemy be less encouraged to enter into a fresh contention for what he had acquired. Such at least were the motives that he assigned for his proceedings : in reality perhaps he was principally induced by the brilliancy which he conceived would attend on the undertaking.

It was a few weeks after the opening of the siege that I presented myself to my royal master. He received me with those winning and impressive manners by which he was so eminently distinguished. He recollected immediately all that had passed at our interview in the vale of Ardres, and warmly expressed the obligations which France had at various times owed to my ancestors. He spoke with earnest respect of the virtues and wisdom of my mother, and commended the resolution by which she had in former instances held me back from the public theatre. " Young gentleman," said the king, " I doubt not the gallantry of your spirit ; I see the impatience of a martial temper written in our face ; I expect you to act in a manner worthy of your illustrious race, and of the instructions of a woman who deserved to be herself a pattern to all the matrons of France. Fear not that I shall suffer your accomplishments to rust in obscurity. *I shall employ you. I shall assign you the* post

post of danger and of renown. Fill it nobly; and from that hour I shall rank you in the catalogue of my chosen friends."

The siege of Pavia proved indeed to be a transaction, in the course of which military honour might well be acquired. It was defended by a small, but veteran garrison, and by one of the ablest captains that Europe at that time possessed *. He interrupted the approach of the besiegers by frequent and furious sallies. In vain, by the aid of our excellent artillery, did we make wide and repeated breaches in the fortifications. No sooner did we attempt to enter by the passage we had opened, than we found ourselves encountered by a body composed of the choicest and bravest soldiers of the garrison. The governor of the city, who, though grey-headed and advanced in years, was profuse of every youthful exertion, was ordinarily at the head of this body. If we deferred our attack, or, not having succeeded in it, proposed to commence it anew with the dawn of the following day, we were sure to find a new wall sprung up in the room of the other, as if by enchantment. Frequently the governor anticipated the success of our batteries, and the old fortification was no sooner demolished, than we beheld to our astonishment and mortification a new wall, which his prudence and skill had erected at a small interval within the line of the former.

One of these attacks took place on the second day after my arrival at the camp of our sovereign. Every thing that I saw was new to me, and inflamed me with ardour. The noise of the cannon, which had preceded the attack, and which was now hushed; the inspiring sounds of martial music which succeeded that noise, the standards floating in the air; the firm and equal tread of the bat-

* Antonio de Leyva.

talion that advanced ; the armour of the knights ; the rugged, resolute and intrepid countenances of the infantry ; all swelled my soul with transport hitherto unexperienced. I had beheld the smoke of the artillery, in the midst of which every thing was lost and confounded ; I had waited in awful suspense till the obscurity should be dissipated ; I saw with pleasure and surprise the ruin of the wall, and the wideness of the breach. All that had been recorded of the military feats of Christian valour seemed then to stand crouded in my busy brain ; the generosity, the condescension, the kindness with which the king had addressed me the day before, urged me to treble exertion. I was in the foremost rank. We surmounted the ditch. We were resisted by a chosen body of Spaniards. The contention was obstinate ; brave men, generous and enterprising spirits, fell on the one side and the other. I seized the cloth of a standard, as, in the playing of the wind, it was brought near to my hand. Between me and the Spaniard that held it there ensued an obstinate struggle. I watched my opportunity, and with my sword severed the flag from its staff. At this moment the trumpets of the king sounded a retreat. I had received two severe wounds, one in the shoulder and the other in the thigh, in the contest. I felt myself faint with the loss of blood. A French officer of a rude appearance and gigantic stature, accosting me with the appellation of boy, commanded me to surrender the standard to him. I refused ; and, to convince him I was in earnest, proceeded to wrap it round my body, and fastened it under my arm. Soon after I became insensible, and in this situation was accidentally found by my uncle and his companions, who immediately took me and my prize under their care. As soon as I was a little recovered of my wounds, the king seized an opportunity, after having bestowed loud commendations upon my gallantry.

lantry of conferring the honours of knighthood upon me in the face of the whole army.

While our tents were pitched under the walls of Pavia, I was continually extending the circle of my acquaintance among the young gentry of France, who, like myself, had attended their sovereign in this memorable expedition. I had some enemies, made such by the distinctions I obtained during the siege. But they were few; the greater part courted me the more, the more I showed myself worthy of their attachment. Envy is not a passion that finds easy root in a Frenchman's bosom. I was one of the youngest of those who attended on the siege; but my brothers in arms were generous rivals, who in the field obstinately strove with me for superior glory, but over the convivial board forgot their mutual competitions, and opened their hearts to benevolence and friendship. "Let us not," was a sentiment I heard often repeated, "forget the object that led us from our pleasant homes to pour from the heights of the Alps upon the fields of Italy. It is to humble the imperious Spaniard, to punish the disloyal Bourbon, to vindicate the honour of our beloved and illustrious monarch. Those walls cover the enemy; yonder mountains serve to hide them from our assault; let no Frenchman mistake him who marches under the same standard for an adversary."

The trenches had not been opened before Pavia, till about the beginning of November. The winter overtook us, and the siege was yet in progress; with some apparent advantage indeed to our side of the question, but by no means promising an instant conclusion. The season set in with unusual severity; and both officer and soldier were glad, as much as possible to fence out its rigour by the indulgences of the genial board. My finances, as I have said, were at the commencement of the expedition in excellent order; I had brought with me a
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considerable sum; and it was not spared upon the present occasion.

There were however other things to be attended to; besides the demands of conviviality. The king became impatient of the delays of the siege. The garrison and the inhabitants were reduced to great extremities; but the governor discovered no symptoms of a purpose to surrender. In the mean time intelligence was brought that Bourbon was making the most extraordinary exertions in Germany, and promised to bring to the enemy a reinforcement of twelve thousand men from that country, while the Imperial generals, by mortgaging their revenues, and pawning their jewels, and still more by their eloquence and influence with those under their command, were able to keep together the remains of a disheartened and defeated army in expectation of his arrival. There was some danger therefore, if the siege were not speedily terminated, that the king might ultimately be obliged to raise it with ignominy, or to fight the enemy under every disadvantage. Francis however was not to be deterred from his undertaking. He swore a solemn oath, that Pavia should be his, or he would perish in the attempt.

Thus circumstanced he conceived a very extraordinary project. Pavia is defended on one side by the Tesino, the scene of the first of the four famous battles by which Hannibal signalised his invasion of Italy. The king believed that if this river could by the labour of his army be diverted from its course, the town must instantly fall into his hands. He was encouraged to the undertaking, by recollecting a stratagem of a similar nature by which Cyrus formerly made himself master of the city of Babylon. It was a thought highly flattering to the grandeur of his soul, to imagine that posterity would in this instance institute a parallel between *him and Cyrus the Great*.

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The plan for diverting the course of the Tésino produced a new and extraordinary scene. It was, as may well be believed, a work of uncommon labour. A new channel was to be scooped out and deepened; and, while the stream was turned into this channel, piles were to be sunk, and an immense mound of earth created, as an effectual impediment to the waters resuming their former course. This was a heavy burthen to the soldier, in addition to the disadvantage of being encamped during the course of a winter, remarkably severe for the climate in which we fought. By any other army the task would have been performed with cloudiness and discontent, if not complained of with repining and murmurs. But here the gaiety of the French character displayed itself. The nobility of France, who attended their sovereign in great numbers, accompanied the infantry in their labour. We laid aside the indulgence of the marquise, of tapestry and carpets; we threw off our upper garments; and each seized a spade, a barrow of earth, or a mattock. We put our hands to the engines, and refused no effort under pretence that it was sordid or severe. While the trees were leafless, and nature appeared bound up in frost, sweat ran down our faces and bedewed our limbs. The army were encouraged by our example. An employment which under other circumstances would have been regarded as rigid, was thus made a source of new hilarity and amusement. It was a memorable sight to behold the venerable and grey-headed leaders of the French army endeavouring to exert the strength and activity of their early years. To me, who had but lately arrived at the stature of manhood, and who was accustomed to all the exercises which gave strength and vigour to the frame, this new employment was in no degree burthensome. I felt in it the satisfaction that a swift man experiences when he enters the lists of the race; I congratulated myself upon the nature of my education; if it be a sin to

covet honour, that guilt was mine; and, so great was my appetite for it, that I was inexpressibly rejoiced to observe the various ways in which it might be gratified.

Strange as it may seem, this scene of a winter-camp, in the midst of blood and sweat, surrounded with dangers, and called on for unparalleled exertions, appears to me through the vista of years that is now interposed between, to have been one of the happiest of my life. The gay labours and surprises of the day, were succeeded by a convivial evening in which we did not the less open our hearts, though frequently liable to be interrupted in our midnight revels by the inexhaustible activity and stratagems of the enemy. In this various and ever-shifting scene, I forgot the disasters that occurred, and the blood that flowed around me. All sense of a large and impartial mortality was, for the time at least, deadened in my breast. I was ever upon the alert. The diversity of events neither suffered my spirits to flag, nor reflection to awake. It is only upon such occasions, or occasions like these, that a man is able fully to feel what life is, and to revel in its exuberance. Above all, I was delighted with the society and friendship of my brother-officers. They honoured me; they loved me. I seemed to feel what sympathy was; and to have conscious pleasure of making one in a race of beings like myself. Such were my sensations.

It must not however be imagined that all about me felt in these respects as I did. I was deeply indebted in this particular to my youth and my fortune. The old endeavoured to brace themselves in vain; they sunk under the continual pressure. The poor soldier from the ranks laboured incessantly, and I laboured as much as he; but he had little opportunity to recruit his vigour and renovate his strength. There was yet another class of persons in the camp, whose gaiety was much less uninterrupted than mine. These were the king and the generals.

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who commanded under him. They could not be entirely devoid of thought and consideration. They suffered much anxiety from the length of the siege; and felt that every period of delay increased the doubtfulness of the event.

Antonio de Leyva, governor of the city, necessarily felt himself alarmed at the extraordinary project in which we were engaged, and made every exertion to prevent it. One evening the king sent for me to his tent, and told me in confidence that the enemy intended that very night to make three several attacks upon our mound, one on each side of the stream, and one by means of boats in the centre. Two of these, he said, were merely intended as feints; the west bank of the Tesino was the point against which their principal exertions would be directed. On that side he was resolved to command in person; the boats with which he proposed to resist their flota he confided to one of the most famous and valuable officers of his army; the detachment on the east bank he purposed to intrust to my uncle and myself. He observed that the detachment he could spare for that purpose, after having formed the other two bodies, and reserved a sufficient number for the defence of the camp and the works, would be small; and he warned me to the exertion of a particular vigilance. It would be doubly unfortunate, if a body, the attack upon which was to be merely a feigned one, should nevertheless be routed. Go, added he, fulfil my expectations; deport yourself answerably to the merit of your first achievement; and depend upon it that you will prove hereafter one of the most eminent supporters of the martial glory of France.

The marquis de Villeroy divided our little force into two bodies: with the larger he lay in wait for the enemy near the scene of the expected attack; the smaller he confided to my direction, and placed so that we might

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able to fall upon the rear of the garrison-troops as soon as they should be fully engaged with our comrades. In the situation assigned me, I took advantage of the skirts of a wood, which enabled me to approach very near to the expected route of our assailants without being perceived by them. The night was extremely dark, yet the vicinity of my position was such that I could count the numbers of the adversary as they passed along before my hiding place. I was alarmed to find that they amounted to at least the triple of what we had been taught to expect. They were no sooner past, than I dispatched to the king a young knight, my particular friend, who happened to be with me, to urge the necessity of a reinforcement. At the same time I sent a messenger to my uncle, by a circuitous route, to inform him of what I had observed, and the step I had taken, and to intreat him to defer the attack as long as consistently with propriety it should be possible. The enemy however had no sooner arrived at the place of his destination, than the troops of the marquis, no longer capable of restraint, rushed to engage. The Spaniards were at first surprised, but a short time led them to suspect the weakness of their assailants, nor was the assistance I brought to my uncle sufficient to turn the fortune of the fight. We lost many of our men; the rest apparently gave ground; and it was a vain attempt amidst the darkness of the night, to endeavour to restore order and rally them to the assault. We were already almost completely overpowered, when the succours we expected reached us. They were however unable to distinguish friend from enemy. A storm of mingled rain and snow had come on, which benumbed our limbs, drove fiercely in our faces, and rendered every object alike viewless. The carnage which in this situation took place, was terrible. Our blows were struck at random. A Frenchman was not less dreadful than a Spaniard. When the battle ceased, scarcely one of the
enemy

- enemy was left alive; but we observed with astonishment and horror the number of the besiegers who had probably, in the midst of the confusion, been cut to pieces by their own countrymen.

I am now arrived at the period which put an end to the festivity and jocundness of the campaign. All after this was one continued series of disaster. About the close of January, our work, though not wholly interrupted, was considerably retarded by a succession of heavy rains. This was injurious to us in many ways; our project, which was executed in the midst of waters, rendered additional damp a matter of serious consideration. We were also seized with an apprehension of still greater magnitude, which was speedily realised. The snows being at length completely dissolved, and the quantity of water continually increasing, we perceived one afternoon strong symptoms that our mound, the principal subject of our labour and source of our hope, was giving way in various places. The next morning at day-break, it rushed down every where at once with wonderful violence and noise. It is difficult to describe the sensation of anguish which was instantly and universally diffused. The labour of many weeks was overthrown in a moment. As we had proceeded in our work, we every day saw ourselves nearer the object to which we aspired. At this time our project was almost completed, and Pavia was in imagination already in our hands, to gain possession of which had cost us such unremitting exertions, the sacrifice of so much gallantry, and the loss of so many warriors. We were confounded at the catastrophe we encountered. We gazed at each other, each in want of encouragement, and every one unable to afford it.

Still however we were not destitute of our dangers. The garrison began to be in want both of ammunition and provisions. They were in a general state of *desolation, almost of nothing*, which severely affected the

and authority of the governor were able to suppress. If the town continued longer unrelieved, it was sure to fall into our hands. But even this our last hope was considerably diminished by the intelligence we received the very day after the destruction of our mound, that the imperial army, after having received large reinforcements, was approaching in considerable force. The king had some time before, in the height of his confidence, and elation of his heart, sent off a detachment of six thousand men to invade the kingdom of Naples; for upon that, as well as the Milanese, he had inherited pretensions from his immediate predecessors.

But, though the enemy was superior in numbers, and a part perhaps of their forces better disciplined than ours, they laboured under several disadvantages to which we were not exposed. The emperor, though his dominions were more extensive, did not derive from them a revenue equal to that of Francis. As he did not take the field in person, the war appeared to his subjects only a common war, proceeding upon the ordinary motives of war. But my countrymen were led by their sovereign, were fresh from the recent insolence of an invasion of their own territory, and fought at once for personal glory and their country's honour. The king who commanded them, seemed expressly formed to obtain their attachment and affection. His nobles became enthusiastic by the example of his enthusiasm, and willingly disbursed their revenues to give prosperity and éclat to the campaign.

The first question that arose upon the approach of the enemy, was, whether we should break up the siege, and attend in some strong post the slow, but sure, effect of their want of money, and the consequent dispersion of their troops, or wait their attack in our present posture. The former advice was safe; but to the gallant spirit of Francis it appeared ignominious. He was upon all occasions the partisan of rapid measures and decisive pro-

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ceedings; and his temper, with the exception of a few wary and deliberate counsellors, accorded with that of our whole army. For some days we congratulated ourselves upon the wisdom of our choice; we presented to the enemy so formidable an appearance, that, notwithstanding the cogent motives he had to proceed, he hesitated long before he ventured to attack us. At length however the day came, that was pregnant with so momentous expectation.

If through the whole limits of our camp there was not a man that did not feel himself roused upon this glorious occasion, to me it was especially interesting. The scene accorded with the whole purpose of my education, and novelty made it impressive. I lived only in the present moment. I had not a thought, a wish, a straggling imagination, that wandered beyond the circuit of the day. My soul was filled, at one minute wild with expectation, and at another awed into solemnity. There is something indescribably delicious in this concentration of the mind. It raises a man above himself; and makes him feel a certain nobleness and elevation of character, of the possession of which he was to that hour unconscious. Fear and pain were ideas that could find no harbour in my bosom; I regarded this as the most memorable of days, and myself as the most fortunate of mortals. Far indeed was I from anticipating the disgraceful event, in which this elation of heart speedily terminated.

The sun rose bright in a cloudless sky. The cold of the season was such, as only to give new lightness and elasticity to the muscles and animal spirits. I saw few of those objects of nature, which in this delightful climate gave so sacred a pleasure to the human soul. But in my present temper there was no object of sight so ravishing, as the firm and equal steps of the martial bands, the impatience of the war-horse, and the display of military standards; nor any music so enchanting, as the shrillness of

of the pipe, the clangor of the trumpet, the neighing of steed, and the roaring of cannon. It is thus that man disguises to himself the real nature of his occupation; and clothes that which is of all things most nefarious or most to be lamented, with the semblance of jubilee and festival.

The Imperialists were at first unable to withstand the efforts of French valour. They gave way on every side; we pursued our advantage with impetuosity. To the slaughter of whole ranks mowed down with tremendous celerity, to the agonies of the dying, I was blind; their groans had no effect on my organs, for my soul was occupied in another direction. My horse's heels spurned their mangled limbs, and were red with their blood. I fought not merely with valour, but with fury; I animated those around me by my example and my acclamations. It may seem contrary to delicacy to speak with this freedom of my own praises; but I am at my present writing totally changed and removed from what I was, and I write with the freedom of a general historian. It is this simplicity and ingenuousness that shall pervade the whole of my narrative.

The fortune of the day speedily changed. The cowardice and desertion of our Swiss allies, gave the first signal of adversity. The gallant commander of the garrison of Pavia, sallied out in the midst of the fight, and suddenly attacked us in the rear. A stratagem of the Imperial general effected the route of our cavalry. The whole face of the field was utterly reversed.

It would be in vain for me to attempt to describe even the small part that I beheld of the calamity and slaughter of the French army. At this distance of time, the recollection of it opens afresh the almost obliterated wounds of my heart. I saw my friends cut down, and *perish on every side*. Those who, together with myself, *had marched out in the morning, swelled with exultation* and

and hope, now lay weltering in their blood. Their desires, their thoughts, their existence, were brought to a fatal termination. The common soldiers were hewed and cut to pieces by hundreds without note and observation. Many of the first nobility of France, made desperate by the change of the battle, rushed into the thickest of the foe, & became so many voluntary sacrifices, chusing rather to perish than to turn their backs with dishonour.

In the battle I had two horses killed under me. The first of them suffered a sort of gradual destruction. He had already received one wound in the nostrils, and another in the neck, when a third shot carried away two of his feet, and laid him prostrate on the earth. Bernardin, my faithful attendant, observed what was passing, and immediately brought me a fresh charger; but I had not long mounted him, when he received a wound which killed him on the spot. I was myself hurt in several places, and at length the stroke of a sabre brought me to the ground. Here I remained for a long time insensible. When I recovered, and looked around me, I found myself in entire solitude, and could at present perceive no trace either of the enemy or of my own people. Soon however I recollected what had passed, and was but too well assured of the defeat my countrymen has sustained. Weak and battered as I was, I attempted to retire to a place of greater security. I had scarcely changed my ground, before I saw a trooper of the enemy rushing towards me with the intention to take away my life. Fortunately I observed a tree at hand, to the shelter of which I hastened; and, partly by moving the branches to and fro, and partly by shifting my position, I baffled my adversary, till he became weary of the attempt. A moment after, I saw one of my most intimate and familiar companions killed before my eyes. It was not long however before a party of fugitive French came up to the spot where I stood, and I, like the rest,

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was hurried from the field. My uncle perished in the battle.

It is wonderful how men can harden their hearts against such scenes as I then witnessed. It is wonderful how they can be brought to co-operate in such demoniac fury, and more than demoniac mischief, barbarity and murder. But they are brought to it; and enter, not from a deplorable necessity, but as to a festival, in which each man is eager to occupy his place, and share the amusements. It seemed to me at that time, as it seems to me now, that it should be enough for a man to contemplate such a field as I saw at Pavia, to induce him to abjure the trade of violence forever, and to commit his sword once more to the bowels of the earth, from which it was torn for so nefarious a purpose.

These sensations, though now finally established in my mind, were at the time of which I am writing but of fleeting duration. The force of education and the first bent of my mind, were too strong. The horror which overwhelmed me in the first moments of this great national defeat subsided; and the military passion returned upon me in its original ardour. My convictions, and the moral integrity of my soul, were temporary; and I became myself a monument of that inconstancy and that wonder, to which I have just alluded.

Various circumstances however prevented this passion from its direct operation. The character of France was altered by the battle of Pavia, though mine remained the same. It was in the fullest degree decisive of the fortune of the war. Milan, and every other place in the duchy, opened their gates to the conqueror: and, in a fortnight, not a Frenchman was left in the fields of Italy. Of the whole army only a small body effected an orderly retreat, under the command of the duke of Alençon. Many persons of the highest distinction perished in the battle: many were made prisoners by the enemy. *France by this event found the list of her noblesse considerably reduced in numbers; add to which, those whose*
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loss she sustained, were almost all of them taken from among the most distinguished and meritorious in the catalogue.

But what constituted the principal feature in this memorable event, was that the king himself was found in the number of the prisoners; nor was he released by his ungenerous competitor till after more than a twelve-month's confinement. During this period Francis tasted of the dregs of adversity. Inclined in the first instance to judge of his rival by himself, he expected a liberal treatment. In this he was deeply disappointed. After a detention of many months in the Milanese, the scene of his former successes, he was transferred to Madrid. He was personally neglected by the emperor, while his disloyal subject* was treated with singular distinction. The most rigorous terms were proposed to him. All this had the effect, in one instance, of sinking him into a disease of languor and dejection which he was not expected to survive; and, in another, of inducing him to execute an instrument by which he abdicated the crown, and declared his resolution of remaining a prisoner for life. His confinement was at length terminated by his solemnly engaging to compulsory articles, which he was determined to break as soon as he found himself at liberty; an alternative peculiarly grating to the liberality of his spirit. This reverse of fortune materially changed his character. The fine spirit of his ambition was from this time evaporated; and, while he still retained the indefeasible qualities of his soul, and was gallant, kind-hearted and generous, he bartered, as far as was compatible with his disposition, the enterprising and audacious temper he had previously manifested, for the wary and phlegmatic system of his more fortunate competitor. His genius cowered before that of Charles; and the de-

* The constable of Bourbon.

feat of Pavia may perhaps be considered as having given a deadly wound to the reign of chivalry, and a secure foundation to that of craft, dissimulation, corruption and commerce.

CHAP. III.

THE lists of military ambition then being closed, if not permanently, at least for a time, my mind took a new bias; and, without dismissing its most cherished and darling passion, pursued a path in the present emergency, to which the accidents of my youth had also guided me. If my mother had survived, she would probably, either not have consented to my serving at the siege of Pavia, or at least would have recalled me to the obscurity of my paternal chateau as soon as the campaign was at an end. I had not fully completed the twentieth year of my age, at the period of the memorable battle in which my sovereign was made prisoner. I was left without adviser or guide; even the marquis de Villeroy, my mother's brother, of whatever consequence his admonitions to me might have proved, was taken from me in this fatal engagement. The king himself perhaps, had it not been for the dreadful calamities in which he was now involved, might have condescended to interest himself in some degree in my welfare. By the course of events, I was left, yet a minor, and with an ample revenue at my disposition, to be wholly guided by the suggestions of my own mind.

In the portion of his reign already elapsed, the splendid and interesting qualities of Francis had given a new spring to the sentiments of the nation. He was the most accomplished and amiable prince of the time in which he lived. There was but one of all the sovereigns of Christendom that could cope with him in power,

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er, the emperor Charles; and, as Charles' peculiarities were of a sort that Frenchmen were accustomed to regard with aversion and contempt, so there had not been a doubt among my compatriots, of the side upon which the superiority would ultimately rest. By the events of the day of Pavia they were confounded and overwhelmed. They did not despair of their country; they soon felt, and felt to its utmost extent, the rank which France held among the European states. But the chain of their ideas was interrupted; they could not but be conscious that the fortune of the kingdom had received a grievous check. The illustrious career which they had in fancy already traversed, was postponed to a distant period.

The consequences which flow from a suppressed ambition may easily be imagined. The nobility of France exchanged the activity of the field for the indulgences of the table: that concentrated spirit which had sought to expand itself upon the widest stage, now found vent in the exhibition of individual expense: and, above all, the sordid and inglorious passion for gaming, a vice eminently characteristic of the age, now especially gained strength and drew multitudes into its destructive vortex. It was perhaps impossible for a young man to have entered the theatre of the world under less favourable auspices.

In what I have already written, I felt myself prompted to enlarge with complacency upon the sentiments and scenes of my youth; and I have yielded to the suggestion. The same internal admonition makes me shrink from entering with minuteness into the detail of my ruin. I recollect my infatuation with abhorrence; I fly from the memory with sensations inexpressibly painful; I regard it as a cloud that overshadowed and blackened for ever the fair prospects of my earlier years.

I shall not enumerate all my youthful companions, or all my youthful follies. I committed a mistake obvious enough

enough, at this immature period of my existence, when I mistook profusion and extravagance for splendour and dignity; and the prudent economy which my mother had practised, served in the present instance as the pander to my vices. The whole tendency of my education had been to inspire me with a proud and restless desire of distinction; and I was not content to play a second part in the career of my vices, as I should not have been content to play a second part in the genuine theatre of honour and fame. In all that was thoughtlessly spirited and gaily profligate I led the way to my compeers, and was constantly held up by them as an example. By this conduct I incurred the censure of the rigorous and the old; but the voice of censure reached me much seldomer than that of adulation. My person and demeanor were the topics of general applause. I was tall and well proportioned; my frame was slender and agile, but with an appearance of the fullest health; my countenance was open, commanding and animated. My rank and situation in the world gave me confidence; the fire and impetuosity of my temper rendered my gestures easy, rapid, expressive and graceful. The consequence of all this was to confirm me in a plan of life which I early laid down to myself, and from which I never in any instance deviated. I put aside those rules as splenetic and hypercritical, which confessors preach, and with which the preceptors of young men are accustomed to weary and alienate the minds of their pupils. The charge of being disorderly and unthinking I despised; that of imprudence, even when meant for blame, sounded in my ear like the voice of encomium. But accustomed from education to sentiments of honour, and from habit to the language of eulogy, it is difficult for any man to be more firmly bent than I was to incur no breath of dishonor, or to draw the line more peremptorily, between the follies of youth, and the aberrations of a gross and unprincipled spirit.

It may be alledged indeed, and with considerable justice, that the habit of gaming is an exception to this statement. It was with hesitation and reluctance that I entered into this habit. I saw it as it was, and as every ingenuous and undebauched mind must see it, base and sordid. The possession of some degree of wealth I regarded indeed as indispensable to a man who would fill a lofty and respectable character in the world, a character that, by uniting the advantages of exterior appearance with the actions of a hero, should extort the homage of his species. But, in the picture I drew of this man in my mind, I considered wealth as an accident, the attendant on his birth, to be dispensed with dignity, not to be adverted to with minuteness of attention. Deep play is certainly sufficiently inconsistent with this character. The direct purpose of the gamester is to transfer money from the pocket of his neighbour into his own. He rouses his sleepy and wearied attention by the most sordid of all motives. The fear of losing pierces his heart with anguish; and to gain, to obtain an advantage for himself, which can scarcely exceed, and which seldom equals, the injury his competitor suffers, is the circumstance which most transports his heart with delight. For this he watches; for this he calculates. An honourable gamester does not seize with premeditation the moment when his adversary is deprived, by wine or any other cause, of his usual self-possession. He does not seek with sober malice to play upon his passions. He does not enter with avidity into the contest with an unpractised, but presuming rival. But he cannot avoid rejoicing, when he finds that accident has given him an unusual advantage. I have often thought that I could better understand how a man of honour could reconcile himself to the accursed and murderous trade of war, than to the system of the gaming-table. In war he fights with a stranger, a man with whom he has no habits of kindness.

kindness, and who is fairly apprised that he comes against him with ruinous intent. But in play he robs perhaps his brother, his friend, the partner of his bosom; or, in every event, a man seduced into the snare with all the arts of courtesy, and whom he smiles upon, even while he stabs.

I am talking here the mere reason and common sense of the question as it relates to mankind in general. But it is with other feelings that I reflect upon the concern I have myself individually in the subject. Years roll on in vain; ages themselves are useless here; looking forward; as I do, to an existence that shall endure till time shall be no more; no time can wipe away the remembrance of the bitter anguish that I have endured, the consequence of gaming. It is torture! It is madness! Poverty, I have drained thy cup to the dregs! I have seen my wife and my children looking to me in vain for bread! Which is the most intolerable distress? That of the period, in which all the comforts of life gradually left me; in which I caught at every fragment of promise, and every fragment failed; in which I rose every morning to pamper myself with empty delusions; in which I ate the apples of purgatory, fair without, but within bitterness and ashes; in which I tossed, through endless, sightless nights, upon the couch of disappointment and despair? Or the period, when at length all my hopes were at an end; when I fled with horror to a foreign climate; when my family, that should have been my comfort, gave me my most poignant agony; when I looked upon them, naked, destitute and exiles, with the tremendous thought, what and who it was that had caused their ruin? Adversity, without consolation, adversity, when its sting is reinorse, self-abhorrence and self-contempt,—hell has no misery by which it can be thrown into shade or exceeded!

Why

Why do I dwell upon, or at least why do I anticipate, this detested circumstance of my story? Let me add one remark in this place, and pass on to the other particulars of this epoch of my prodigality. It is true, I must take this shameful appellation to myself—I was a gamester. But, in the beginning, I took no concern in that species of science which is often implied in the appellation. My games were games of hazard, not of skill. It appeared to my distempered apprehension, to be only a mode in which for a man to display his fortitude and philosophy. I was flattered with the practice of gaming, because I saw in it, when gracefully pursued, the magnanimity of the Stoic, combined with the manners of a man of the world; a magnanimity that no success is able to intoxicate, and no vicissitude to subvert. I committed my property to the hazard of the die; and I placed my ambition in laughing alike at the favours of fortune and her frowns. In the sequel however I found myself deceived. The fickle goddess sufficiently proved that she had the power of making me serious. But in her most tremendous reverses I was never influenced to do any thing that the most scrupulous gamester regards as dishonourable. I say not this for the purpose of giving colour and speciousness to my tale. I say it, because I have laid it down to myself in this narrative as a sacred principle, to relate the simple, unaltered truth.

Another characteristic of the reign of Francis the First, is its gallantries. It is well known how much the king was himself occupied with attachments of this sort; his government was rather the government of women than of politicians; and the manners of the sovereign strongly tended to fix the habits of his subjects. A very young man rather takes the tone of his passions from those about him, than forms one that is properly his own; and this was my case in the present instance as well as in the preceding. Originally of an amorous
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constitution, I should perhaps have quieted the restlessness of my appetites without ostentation and eclat, had not the conduct of my youthful associates in general led me to regard gallantry as an accomplishment indispensably necessary in a young man of rank. It must be confessed indeed that this offence against the rigour of discipline has a thousand advantages over that of gaming. Few women of regular and reputable lives, have that ease of manners, that flow of fancy, and that graceful intrepidity of thinking and expressing themselves, that is sometimes to be found among those who have discharged themselves from the tyranny of custom. There is something irresistibly captivating in that voluptuousness which, while it assumes a certain air of freedom, uniformly and with preference conforms itself to the dictates of unsophisticated delicacy. A judicious and limited voluptuousness, is necessary to the cultivation of the mind, to the polishing of the manners, to the refining of sentiment, and the developement of the understanding; and a woman deficient in this respect, may be of use for the government of our families, but can neither add to the enjoyments, nor fix the partiality, of a man of animation and taste.

But, whatever there may be in these considerations, certain it is, that the conduct I pursued in matters of gallantry, led me into great and serious expences. The mistresses, with whom I chanced to associate, had neither the inexpressible captivation of madame de Chateaubriant*, nor the aspiring and impressive manners of the dutchess d' Etampes.* They had however beauty and vivacity, frolic without rudeness, and softness without timidity. They had paid some regard to points of knowledge and taste, considering these as additional means for fixing the partiality of their paramours, and knowing

* Mistresses of Francis I.

that they had no security for the permanence of their prosperity but in the variety of their attractions. In their society I was led into new trains of reflection, a nicer consideration of human passion and the varieties of human character, and, above all, into a greater quickness and delicacy in matters of intellectual taste. My hours, for the most part, rolled swiftly and easily away, sometimes in the society of the young, the gay and the ambitious of my own sex, and sometimes in the softer and more delicious intercourse of the fair. I lived in the midst of all that Paris could at that time furnish of splendid and luxurious. This system of living was calculated to lull me in pleasing dreams, and to waste away existence in delirious softness. It sufficiently accorded with the sad period of our sovereign's captivity, when my young compatriots sought to drown the sense of public and patriotic considerations in copious draughts of pleasure; nor did the monarch's return immediately restore to France her former haughtiness and pride.

The course of sensuality in which I was now engaged, though it did not absolutely sink into grossness, may well be supposed to have trodden upon the very edge of license. I and my companions were young; we were made fearless and presuming by fortune and by rank; we had laid aside those more rigorous restraints which render the sober part of mankind plausible and decent, by making them timid and trite. I will not contaminate the minds of my innocent and inexperienced readers by entering into the detail of the follies in which I engaged.

One thing it is necessary to remark as essential to the main thread of my story. My expences of all kinds, during this period of self-desertion, drained my resources, but did not tarnish my good name. My excesses were regarded by some as ornamental and becoming, but by all were admitted as venial. The laurels I had won in the field of military honour were not obscured by my subsequent

sequent conduct. I was universally ranked among the most promising and honourable of the young noblemen of France. I had some rivals; I did not pass through this turbulent and diversified scene without disputes; but no one cast a reflection upon my name, no one ventured to speak of me with superciliousness and opprobrium. Nor was my temper more injured than my reputation. From every dispute I extricated myself with grace and propriety; I studied the pleasure and ease of all with whom I associated; and no man enjoyed more extensively than I did the sweets of friendship, as far as the sweets of friendship can be extensively enjoyed.



CHAP. IV.

I HAD been now two years in habits of life and a mode of expence extremely injurious to my patrimony, when a circumstance occurred, which promised completely to deliver me from the ruinous consequences of my own folly. This was no other than my encounter with that incomparable woman, who afterwards became the partner of my life, and the mother of my children. I cannot even now recollect her without tears: the sentiment which her very name excites in my mind, is a mingled feeling, on the one hand, of the most exquisite and unspeakable delight, a feeling that elevates and expands and electrifies my throbbing heart; and, on the other, of the bitterest anguish and regret.—I must develope the source of this feeling.

Marguerite Louise Isabeau de Damville was, at the period of our first meeting, in the nineteenth year of her age. Her complexion was of the most perfect transparency, her eyes black and sparkling, and her eyebrows *dark and long*. Such were the perfect smoothness and
clearness.

clearness of her skin, that at nineteen she appeared five years younger than she was, and she long retained this extreme juvenility of form. Her step was airy and light as that of a young fawn, yet at the same time firm, and indicative of strength of body and vigour of mind. Her voice, like the whole of her external appearance, was expressive of undesigning, I had almost said childish, simplicity. Yet, with all this playfulness of appearance, her understanding was bold and correct. Her mind was well furnished with every thing that could add to her accomplishments as a wife or a mother. Her indulgent parents had procured her every advantage of education, and circumstances had been uncommonly favourable to her improvement. She was encouraged and assisted in the art of drawing, for which she discovered a very early talent, by Leonardo de Vinci; and she formed her poetical taste from the conversation and instructions of Clement Marot. But, amidst the singular assemblage of her intellectual accomplishments, there was nothing by which she was so much distinguished, as the uncommon prudence of her judgments, and the unalterable amiableness of her manners. This was the woman destined to crown my happiness, and consummate my misery. If I had never known her, I should never have tasted true pleasure; if I had been guided by her counsels, I should not have drained to the very dregs the cup of anguish.

The house of her father, the marquis de Damville, was the resort of all the most eminent wits and scholars of that period, particularly of Marot, Rabelais, Erasmus and Scaliger. This was my first inducement to frequent it. My education had inspired me with an inextinguishable love of literature; and the dissipation in which I was at this time involved, could not entirely interrupt the propensity. The most thoughtless and extravagant period of my life had occasional intervals of study and reflection; and the gay, animated and ingenious conversation

tion of the men I have mentioned, had always peculiar charms for me.

I had continued for some time to visit at the marquis's hotel, before I encountered the beautiful Marguerite. The first time I saw her, she made a deep impression upon me. The marquis, who was one of the most benevolent and enlightened of mankind, had been led by my character and manners to conceive a warm friendship for me. He saw the ruin in which I was heedlessly involving myself, and believed that it was not yet too late to save me. As he thought that there was no method so likely to effect my reformation as the interposition of domestic affections, he was not unwilling to encourage the attachment I began to feel for his daughter. On my part I wanted but little encouragement. I no sooner observed her manners, and became acquainted with her merits, than my heart was unalterably fixed. I became, as it were a new man. I was like one, who, after his eyes had grown imperceptibly dim, till at length every object appeared indistinct and of a gloomy general hue, has his sight instantaneously restored, and beholds the fabric of the universe in its genuine clearness, brilliancy and truth. I was astonished at my own folly that I could so long have found gratification in pleasures mean and sensual. I was ashamed of my own degradation I could not endure the comparison between the showy unsubstantial attractions of the women I had hitherto frequented, and the charms of the adorable Marguerite. The purity of her mind seemed to give a celestial brilliancy and softness to the beauties of her person. The gross and brutal pursuits of the debauchee are often indeed described by the same epithets as the virtuous refined passion with which I was now for the first inspired; but experience convinced me that they differ in their most essential features.

The marquis saw the state of my mind, and addressed me thus. Count, said he, I feel the most ardent friendship for you. I am inexpressibly concerned for your welfare. You will be convinced of this, when I have furnished with the clue to my late conduct towards you I regard you, if not as a ruined man, at least as a man in the high road to ruin. Your present habits are of the most dangerous sort; they appear to you perfectly conformable to principles of the strictest honour; nay, they come recommended to you by a certain éclat and dignity with which they seem to be surrounded. I could say to you, recollect yourself. Be not misled by delusive appearances. Consider the present state of your fortune and the state in which your mother left it. You cannot be ignorant how greatly it is impaired. How has this circumstance arisen? Have your revenues been expended in the service of your country? Have you purchased any thing by them that will confer on you lasting renown? Put together, the sum of actions, which, piec by piece, you have been willing to regard as indifferent and innocent, if not as graceful and becoming. You cannot but be struck with their monstrous deformity. Is it possible that you can be ignorant of the nature of poverty? There is such a thing as honorable poverty. The poverty of Cincinnatus was honorable, who impoverished himself by paying the fine which was factiously imposed on his son, and then was contented to pass his time alternately between the highest situations and the most rigid simplicity. The poverty of a man of genius such as Rabelais, if not honorable, is interesting, when we compare his merits and worth with that of many of those persons upon whom fortune has blindly lavished her favours. It is honorable, if he have declined the means of enriching himself by the sacrifice of his independence and his principles. But of all earthly things the most contemptible, is the man who, having was

his goods in riotous living, yet hungers after the luxuries that have proved his bane, and feasts himself upon the steam of dainties of which he has lost the substance. Poverty, always sufficiently disadvantageous in a degenerate age, where attention and courtship are doled forth with scales of gold, is tremendous to him. He is the scorn of all mankind. Wherever he is a guest, he is invited only to be trampled upon and insulted. He is capable of nothing, and is a burthen to society and mankind. The helplessness of age advances upon him with stealing steps, and he is destined to gather all its miseries and none of its consolations.

I might have talked to you thus, but I refused it. I apprehend something of the nature of advice. I know that it can seldom be attended with its genuine effect, and will never be received with deference and pleasure, where its motives are capable of misconstruction. If I had talked to you thus, I might have appeared to be indulging the tyranny of age; I might have seemed to assume an unbecoming air of superiority and command: it could not have been clear that I was honestly interested in that, about which I affected so much concern. I doubt not the ingenuousness of your nature. I doubt not that you would have been struck with the picture. But I must be permitted to doubt the adequate and lasting effect of my expostulation. I was not willing by my forwardness and loquacity to wear out one of the great springs of human improvement.

I have determined on your reform. For that purpose I think it necessary to combine my remonstrances and advice, with a change of your habits and situation. You have tasted largely of what are commonly called the pleasures of life, but there are pleasures that you have not tasted. At this moment you anticipate them, and *anticipate them with the ardour of a lover.* But you know

not yet all the gratifications that attend upon domestic affections.

I am willing to bestow upon you my daughter. I consent to prove the purity of my advice, and the sincerity of my regard, by committing her happiness to the risk. She is a treasure, the equal of which perhaps the world does not hold. I speak not of her personal attractions. But in understanding, accomplishments and virtue, I firmly believe, no woman living can compare with her. In possessing her, you will be blessed beyond the lot of princes. But, at the same time that I shall thus put happiness within your grasp, remember that I commit to your disposal the happiness of Marguerite. You are a worthy and an honourable man; your talents and your virtues will constitute her felicity. Her portion will redeem the injury which your patrimony has suffered from your excesses, and you will have enough for yourselves, and for your mutual offspring. I cannot believe, that, with such a deposit entrusted to you, you will consent to bring her to misery and ruin.

I have one condition however to stipulate with you. I require of you as the pledge of her happiness, that you break off your present modes of life, that you separate yourself from your connections, and retire into the country upon your paternal estate. You are yet too young to be in danger from that tyranny of custom, which often renders men more advanced in life incapable of relishing the simple and genuine pleasures. You will find contentment and joy in the society of my daughter, and in the bosom of your rising family. You will be happy in the circle of your own hearth, and have little to ask of the rest of mankind. If, in any ill-omened and inauspicious moment, the allurements of your present vices (forgive the plainness of my speech) should resume their power over you, I hope at least that I shall never live to see it; that I shall not be taught by bitter experience, that

that I have sacrificed to the disinterestedness of my friendship the happiness of my daughter and of my posterity!

My heart weeps blood, while I record the admonitions of this noble and generous man. A nobler France did not contain through all her boundaries! Refined by literature, polished by the best society his age could afford; grown grey in the field of honour, and particularly distinguished by the personal attachment and confidence of his sovereign! What was all this advice to me! What return did I make to this unparalleled kindness and friendship! I ruined this admirable woman! I involved her in poverty and shame! With the most savage barbarity I prepared for her an immature grave! Can I forget this! Of what avail to me are immortal life and immortal youth! Oh, Marguerite, Maaguerite! For ever thy image haunts me, forever thy ghost upbraids me! How little have I proved myself worthy of such a partner! Rather what punishment, what plagues, what shame and detestation have I not deserved! Praised be Heaven! the last prayer of the marquis of Damville at least was granted! He did not live to witness my relapse, my profligacy and insanity!

I resume the thread of my story.—I listened to the address of the marquis with reverence and admiration: I accepted his conditions with joy. I married his adorable daughter, and conducted her to my paternal estate in the Bourdelois. Now only it was that I tasted of perfect happiness. To judge from my own experience in this situation, I should say, that nature has atoned for all the disasters and miseries she so copiously and incessantly pours upon her sons, by this one gift, the transcendent enjoyment and nameless delights which, wherever the heart is pure and the soul is refined, wait on the attachment of two persons of opposite sexes. My beloved *Marguerite* guided and directed me, at the same time that

that she was ever studying my gratification. I instructed her by my experience, while she enlightened me by the rectitude and decision of her taste. Ours was a sober and dignified happiness, and its very sobriety served to give it additional voluptuousness. We had reached our separate pursuits, whether for the cultivation of our minds, or the promotion of our mutual interests. Separation gave us respectability in each other's eyes, while it prepared us to enter with fresh ardour into society and conversation. In company with each other, hours passed over us, and appeared but minutes. It has been said to be a peculiar felicity for any one to be praised by a man who is himself eminently a subject of praise: how much happier to be prized and loved by a person worthy of love? A man may be prized and valued by his friend; but in how different a style of sentiment from the regard and attachment that may reign in the bosom of his mistress or his wife? Self-complacency and self-satisfaction may perhaps be numbered among the principal sources of contentment. It is necessary for him who would endure existence with patience, that he should conceive himself to be something, that he should be persuaded he is not a cypher in the muster-roll of man. How bitter is the anguish we are sometimes doomed to sustain in this respect from the marks we receive of other men's indifference and contempt? To feel that we are loved by one whose love we have deserved, to be employed in the mutual interchange of the marks of this love, habitually to study the happiness of one by whom our happiness is studied in return, this is the most desirable, as it is the genuine and unadulterated condition of human nature. I must have some one to sympathize with; I cannot bear to be cut off from all relations; I desire to experience a confidence, a concord, an attachment, that cannot rise between common acquaintance. In every state we long
for

for some fond bosom on which to rest our weary head, some speaking eye with which to exchange the glances of intelligence and affection. Then the soul warms and expands itself; then it shuns the observation of every other beholder; then it melts with feelings that are inexpressible, but that the heart understands without the aid of words; then the eyes swim with rapture; then the frame languishes with enjoyment; then the soul burns with fire; then the two persons thus blest, are no longer two, distance vanishes, one thought animates, one mind informs them. Thus love acts; thus it is ripened, to perfection; never does man feel himself so much alive, so truly etherial, as when, bursting the bonds of diffidence, uncertainty and reserve, he pours himself entire into the bosom of the woman he adores.

Marguerite de Damville was particularly distinguished from every other woman I ever knew by the justness of her taste and the vividness of her feelings. This circumstance was a fund of inexhaustible delight and improvement to me. We were both of us well acquainted with the most eminent poets and fine writers of modern times. But, when we came to read them together, they presented themselves in a point of view in which they had never been seen by us before. It is perhaps more important that poetry and every thing that excites the imagination or appeals to the heart, should be read in solitude than in society. But the true way to understand our author in these cases, is to employ each of these modes in succession. The terrible, the majestic, the voluptuous and the melting, are all of them in a considerable degree affairs of sympathy, and we never judge of them so infallibly or with so much satisfaction, as when, in the presence of each other, the emotion is kindled in either bosom at the same instant, the eye-beams, pregnant with sentiment and meaning, involuntarily meet and mingle, the voice of the reader becomes modulated.

modulated by the ideas of his author, and that of the hearer, by an accidental interjection of momentary comment or applause, confesses its accord. It was in this manner that we read together the admirable sonnets of Petrarch, and passed in review the sublime effusions of Dante. The letters of Eloisa to Abelard afforded us singular delight. We searched into the effusions of the Troubadours, and, among all their absurdities and inequality, we found a wildness, a daring pouring forth of the soul, an unpruned richness of imagination, and from time to time a grandeur of conception and audacious eccentricity of thought, that filled us with unlooked for transport. At other times, when not regularly engaged in this species of reading, we would repeat passages to each other, communicate the discoveries of this sort that either had made in solitude, and point out unobserved beauties, that perhaps neither of us would have remarked, but for the suggestions of the other. It is impossible for two persons to be constituted so much alike, but that one of them should have a more genuine and instantaneous relish for one sort of excellence, and another for another. Thus we added to each other's stores, and acquired a largeness of conception and liberality of judgment that neither of us would have arrived at, if separate. It is difficult to imagine how prolific this kind of amusement proved of true happiness. We were mutually delighted to remark the accord of our feelings, and still more so, as we perceived that accord to be hourly increasing, and what struck either as a blemish in the other, wearing out and disappearing. We were also led by the same means to advert to the powers of mind existing in each, the rectitude of judgment and delicacy of feeling. As our attachment hourly increased, we rejoiced in this reciprocation of benefits, while each gave or received something that added to value of mind and worth of character. Mutual esteem was incessantly kept

kept alive, and mutual esteem is the only substantial basis of love. Each of us hourly blessed our common lot, while each believed it impracticable elsewhere to have found so much worth blended with so much sweetness.

But we did not confine ourselves to the library and fire-side. We walked, we rode, we travelled together. We observed together the beauties of nature, and the system of the universe. We traversed many provinces of France, and some parts of Italy and Spain. We examined the characters of mankind, as they are modified by the varieties of natural descent, or the diversities of political government. In all this we found peculiar gratification. There is something in the scent and impression of a balmy atmosphere, in the lustre of sunshine, in the azure heaven and the purple clouds, in the opening of prospects on this side and on that, in the contemplation of verdure and fertility and industry and simplicity and cheerfulness in all their variations, in the very act and exercise of travelling, peculiarly congenial to the human frame. It expands the heart, it makes the spirit dance, and exquisitely disposes us for social enjoyment. The mind becomes more elevated and refined, it assumes a microscopical and unwonted sensibility, it feels things which in ordinary moments are unheeded and unknown, it enjoys things too evanescent for a name and too minute to be arrested, it trembles with pleasure through every fibre and every articulation.

One thing is necessary to be mentioned in this place, though, while it adds to the fidelity of delineation, I am aware it breaks the tone of feeling and the harmony of the picture. But it is not my intention in this history to pass myself for better than I am. I have laid down to myself the sacred maxim of absolute truth and impartiality. I must confess therefore, with whatever anguish, my extreme inferiority to my incomparable partner. She *had all the simplicity of genuine taste.* The more she delivered

delivered herself up to nature, the greater was her content. All superfluous appendages and show appeared to her as so many obstacles to enjoyment. She derived her happiness from the tone of her own mind, and stood in no need of the gaping admiration and stupid wonder of others to make her feel herself happy. But I retained the original vice of my mind. The gestures of worship, and the voice of applause were necessary to me. I did not suffice myself. I was not satisfied with the tranquil and inglorious fruition of genuine pleasures, forgetting the vain and anxious tumult of the world, and forgotten by those who figured on its theatre. It may be, that Marguerite could, and ought by insensible degrees, to have rooted out this disease of my mind. But I am concerned only with the statement of facts; and I know that no such thing was the effect of our intercourse.

This absurd passion did not however at this time lead me to any fatal extremities. It contented itself with the frivolous gratification resulting from a certain portion of ostentation and expence. I maintained a considerable train of servants. My apartments were magnificent, and my furniture splendid. When we travelled, it was with an attendance little short of princely. Idiot that I was, to regard this as an addition to the genuine pleasures which I have above enumerated! When we were at home, every accidental guest was received and entertained with extraordinary pomp, a pomp not directed to add to his accommodation, but that was designed to leave him impressed with astonishment and admiration at the spirit of his host. Often indeed did I feel this ostentation an incumbrance. Often did I languish for the ease and freedom which result from a mediocrity of circumstances. But this I called, doing honour to my ancestors and my country, and vindicating the consideration due to the house of St. Leon.

To quit this painful recollection.—A circumstance which tended at this time to fill the measure of my happiness, consisted in the dear pledges which Marguerite bore me of our mutual affection. It is impossible for him who has not experienced it, to conceive the accumulation which a genuine tenderness derives from this source. The difficulties are many, that attend upon pregnancy; trifles are at that period sources of fatigue and injury; it is necessary that the person should be protected, and the mind tranquil. We love to watch over a delicate plant, that appears to call for all our anxiety and attention. There is in this case the sentiment, without the repulsive circumstances, that attends upon our sympathy with a dangerous and alarming disease. Marguerite, by her sensibility and growing attachment, abundantly rewarded my cares. At length the critical period arrives, when an event so extraordinary occurs, as cannot fail to put the human frame in considerable jeopardy. Never shall I forget the interview between us immediately subsequent to her first parturition, the effusion of soul with which we met each other after all danger seemed to have subsided, the kindness which animated us, increased as it was by ideas of peril and suffering, the sacred sensation with which the mother presented her infant to her husband, or the complacency with which we read in each other's eyes a common sentiment of melting tenderness and inviolable attachment!

This, she seemed to say, is the joint result of our common affection. It partakes equally of both, and is the shrine in which our sympathies and our life have been poured together, never to be separated. Let other lovers testify their engagements by presents and tokens; we record and stamp our attachment in this precious creature, a creature of that species which is more *admirable than any thing else* the world has to boast, a creature

ture susceptible of pleasure and pain, of affection and love, of sentiment and fancy, of wisdom and virtue. This creature will daily stand in need of an aid we shall delight to afford; will require our meditations and exertions to forward its improvement, and confirm its merits and its worth. We shall each blend our exertions for that purpose, and our union, confirmed by this common object of our labour and affection, will every day become more sacred and indissoluble.—All this the present weakness of my beloved Marguerite would not allow her to say. But all this occurred to my reflections; and, when we had time tranquilly to compare our recollection of the event, it plainly appeared that in all this our hearts and conceptions had most truly sympathised.

The possessing a third object, a common centre of anxiety to both, is far from weakening the regard of such a couple for each other. It does not separate or divert them; it is a new link of connection. Each is attached to it the more for the sake of either; each regards it as a sort of branch or scion, representing the parent; each rejoices in its health, its good humour, its smiles, its increase in size, in strength and in faculties, principally from the idea of the gratification they will communicate to the other. Were it not for this idea, were it possible the pleasure should not be mutual, the sentiment would be stripped of its principal elevation and refinement; it would be comparatively cold, selfish, solitary and inane.

In the first ten years of our marriage my wife brought me five children, two sons and three daughters. The second son only died in his infancy. My predominant passion at this time was that of domestic pleasures and employments, and I devoted myself, jointly with the mother, to the cultivation of the minds of my children. They all in a considerable degree rewarded our care; they were all amiable. Taught by the example of their parents, they lived in uncommon harmony and affection.

Charles, the eldest, was a lad of a bold and active disposition; but the sentiments of virtue and honour that were infused into him both by Marguerite and myself, found a favourable reception, and promised to render these qualities, which, if left to themselves might have been turbulent and dangerous, productive of the happiest consequences. Julia, his eldest sister, was uncommonly mild and affectionate, alive to the slightest variations of treatment, profoundly depressed by every mark of unkindness, but exquisitely sensible to demonstrations of sympathy and attachment. She appeared little formed to struggle with the difficulties of life and the frowns of the world; but, in periods of quietness and tranquility, nothing could exceed the sweetness of her character and the fascination of her manners. Her chief attachment was to her mother, though she was by no means capable of her mother's active beneficence and heroic fortitude. Louisa, the second daughter, resembled her mother in person, and promised to resemble her in character. Marguerite, the youngest, differed from the whole family, in the playfulness and frolic of her disposition. Her vivacity was inexhaustible, and was continually displaying itself in innocent tricks, and smart, unexpected sallies. Nothing could possibly be more ingenious than this admirable infant; nothing more kind, considerate and enthusiastic in her tenderness and grief, when an occasion occurred to call forth these sentiments. But, the moment the sorrowful occasion was over, she would resume all her vivacity; and even sometimes, in the midst of her tears, some trait of her native humour would escape. I know not whether all the family were not more attached to the little Marguerite than to any other individual member, as she certainly oftenest contributed to their amusement and pleasure.—Such was the amiable circle, one and all of whom have been involved by me in the most tremendous ruin and disgrace.

CHAP. V.

CHARLES was now nine years of age. His mother and myself had delighted ourselves with observing and forwarding the opening of his infant mind, and had hitherto been contented with the assistance of a neighbouring priest by way of preceptor. But, as he was our only son, we were desirous that he should obtain every advantage of education. We were neither of us illiterate; but, in the course of twenty-three years, which had elapsed since I was myself of Charles's age, the progress of literature and the literary passion in Europe had been astonishingly great, and I was anxious that he should realise in his own person every benefit which the fortunate and illustrious period of human affairs in which he began to exist, seemed to hold out to him. Beside, there was an impetuosity and forwardness in his character, that seemed ill to brook the profound solitude and retirement in which his mother and I were contented to live. His case demanded companions of his own age, a little world of fellow-beings, with whom he might engage in their petty business and cares, with whose passions his own might jostle or might sympathise, who might kindle his emulation, and open to him the field of fraternal associations and amity.

There was however a considerable difficulty attendant on this question. The schools of real literature in France, where languages were properly taught, and science might be acquired, were at this time exceedingly few. The nearest university was that of Toulouse, at the distance of twenty six leagues. This was, practically speaking, as far from us as Paris itself. Was then our darling child, to be torn from his parents, from all he was accustomed to see, and all by whom he was loved, to be planted in the midst of strangers, to have his mind excited to observation, and the spirit of generous contention

roused.

roused, at the risque of suppressing the tender affections of his soul, and the sentiments of duty, reliance and love ? There seemed however to be no alternative. It was necessary that a temporary separation should take place.—Intellectual improvement was a point by all means to be pursued ; and we must direct our efforts to keep alive along with it, those winning qualities, and that softness of heart, which had hitherto rendered Charles so eminently our delight. Such were our fond speculations and projects for the future.

It was at length determined that I should proceed along with him to Paris. I could there observe upon the spot the state of the university, and the means of learning that existed in the metropolis ; and could consult with some of those eminent luminaries with whom I had become acquainted at the house of the marquis de Damville. Marguerite declined accompanying me upon this occasion. Her father was dead ; she could not think of quitting her daughters for any considerable time ; and our nuptial engagement of residing always in the country, gave her a repugnance to the removing with her whole family to Paris. It was left probable that she might come to me when the business was settled, it at that time it was determined to leave her son at the capital ; and that she might then reconduct me to the place, which had been the scene of all my happiness, but which I was destined never to revisit in peace.

Preliminaries being at length fully adjusted in the manner that appeared suitable to the importance of the occasion, I set off for the metropolis of my country, which I had seen only once, and that for a very short period, in the course of ten years. That visit had been produced by a very melancholy circumstance, the death of the marquis de Damville. Marguerite and myself had then been summoned, and arrived at his hotel but a few days before he expired. Though extremely weakened by the mortal disease

disease under which he laboured, he retained all the faculties of his mind, and conversed with us in the most affectionate and endearing terms. He congratulated us upon our mutual felicity; nor could the situation in which we found him, upon the brink of an everlasting oblivion of all earthly things, abate the sincerity and fervour of his delight. He thanked me for my carriage and conduct as a husband, which, he said, might with propriety be held up as a model to the human species. He applauded himself for that mingled discernment and determination, which as he affirmed, had so opportunely secured my virtue and his daughter's happiness. He trusted that I was now sufficiently weaned from those habits which had formerly given him so much alarm. At the same time he conjured me, by every motive that an overflowing enthusiasm could suggest, to persist in my good resolutions, never to change that residence, where I had found every degree of delight of which the human mind is in its present condition susceptible. Do not, said he, be drawn aside by ambition; do not be dazzled by the glitter of idle pomp and decoration; do not enter the remotest circle of the vortex of dissipation! Live in the midst of your family—cultivate domestic affection—be the solace and joy of your wife—watch for the present and future welfare of your children—and be assured that you will then be found no contemptible or unbeneficial member of the community at large!

Such were the last advices of the marquis de Damville. Excellent man! how ill were your lessons remembered! how ill your kindness remunerated! He died in the sixth year of our marriage. The serious impression which this event produced in my mind, gave me small inclination to enter into any species of society, and disposed me to quit Paris as soon as every respect had been paid to the obsequies of the deceased.

Upon my arrival in the metropolis on the present occasion,

of soul of which I had rarely partaken in my rural retreat. I delighted to combine excellence with number, and, to a considerable degree at least, variety of intercourse with sentiments of regard and friendship. In these select societies I found no cold suppressions and reserve. Their members were brethren in disposition, similar in their pursuits, and congenial in their sentiments. When any one spoke, it was that the person to whom he addressed himself might apprehend what was passing in his thoughts. They participated with sincerity and a liberal mind in each other's feelings, whether of gay delight or melancholy disappointment.

Thus situated, I forgot for a time my engagements with Marguerite. The scenes of St. Leon, its fields, its walks, its woods and its streams, faded from my mind. I forgot the pleasure with which I had viewed my children sporting on the green, and the delicious, rural suppers which I had so often partaken with my wife beneath my vines and my fig-trees at the period of the setting-sun. When I set out for Paris, these images had dwelt upon my mind, and saddened my fancy. At every stage I felt myself removed still further from the scene where my treasures and my affections were deposited. But shortly after, new scenes and new employments engaged my thoughts. The pleasures which I sought but weakly at first, every time they were tasted increased my partiality for them. I seemed for a time to be under the influence of an oblivion of my former life. Thus circumstanced, the folly which had so deep a root in my character took hold of me. I hired a magnificent hotel, and entertained at my own expence those persons in whose society I principally delighted. My circles became more numerous than those of the marquis de Damville, and were conducted in a very different style of splendour and profusion. I corresponded with Marguerite—but I continually found some new pretext for lengthening my stay ;

and

and she on her part, though the kindest and most indulgent of women, became seriously alarmed and unhappy.

As my parties were more numerous than those of the marquis de Damville had been, they were more mixed. Among others I occasionally associated with some of those noblemen who had been the companions of my former dissipation and gaming. An obvious consequence resulted from this. Parties of play were occasionally proposed to me. I resisted—I yielded. My first compliances were timid, hesitating and painful. I recollected the lessons and exhortations of my excellent father-in-law. At length however my alarms abated. I reproached myself with the want of an honourable confidence in my own firmness, and the cowardice of supposing that I was not to be trusted with the direction of my conduct.

One evening I ventured beyond the cautious limits I had at first prescribed myself, and I won a considerable sum. This incident produced a strong impression upon me, and filled my mind with tumult and agitation.—There was a secret that I had concealed almost from myself, but which now recurred to me with tenfold violence. I was living beyond the means I had to discharge my expences. My propensity of this sort seemed to be fatal and irresistible. My marriage with Marguerite had occurred opportunely, to heal the breaches I had at that time made in my fortune, and to take from me the consciousness of embarrassments which I should otherwise have deeply felt. The death of the marquis, however deplorable in other respects, happened at a period when the spirit of profusion and magnificence which characterised me, had again involved my affairs in considerable difficulty. It might be supposed that these two cases of experience would have sufficed to extirpate my folly.—But they had rather the contrary effect. In each of them the event was such, as to prevent extravagance and thoughtlessness from producing their genuine results—

and of consequence they appeared less criminal and mischievous in my eyes, than otherwise they probably would have appeared. I rather increased than diminished my establishment upon the death of my father-in-law. I had no reasonable prospect of any property hereafter to descend to me, that should exonerate me from the consequences of further prodigality. But I did not advert to this. I saw myself surrounded by my children; they were the delight and solace of my life; and yet I was heedless of their interests. Sometimes I resolved upon a more rigid economy. But economy is a principle that does not easily lay hold of any but a heart framed to receive it. It is a business of attentive and vigilant detail. It easily escapes the mind, amidst the impetuosity of the passions, the obstinacy of rooted propensities, and the seduction of long established habits. Marguerite indeed did not share with me in these follies; the simplicity and ingenuousness of her mind were such, that she would have been as happy in a cottage as a palace; but, though she did not partake my vices, an ill-judged forbearance and tenderness for my feelings, did not permit her effectually to counteract them. This is perhaps the only defect of character I am able to impute to her.

After I had won the sum to which I have alluded, I retired to my hotel full of anxious thoughts. It produced upon me in some degree the same effect as ordinarily belongs to a great calamity. I lay all night sleepless and disturbed. Ruin and despair presented themselves to my mind in a thousand forms. Heedless prodigality and dilapidated revenues passed in review before me. I counted the years of my life. I had completed the thirty second year of my age. This was scarcely half the probable duration of human existence. How was I to support the remaining period, a period little assorted to difficulties and expedients, and which, in the close of it, seems imperiously to call for every indulgence? Hitherto an interval

of four or five years had repeatedly sufficed to involve me in serious embarrassments. My children were growing up around me—my family was likely to become still larger—as my offspring increased in years, their demands upon my revenues would be more considerable. Were these demands to be slighted? Were my daughters, nay, was the heir of my rank and my name, to be committed to the compassion of the world, unprovided and forlorn? What a cheerless prospect? What a gloomy and desolate hue did these ideas spread upon that future, which the health of the human mind requires to have gilded with the beams of hope and expectation? I had already tried the expedient of economy, and I had uniformly found this inestimable and only sheet-anchor of prudence gliding from my deluded grasp. Could I promise myself better success in future? There seemed to be something in my habits, whether of inattention, ostentation or inconsistency, that baffled the strongest motives by which parsimony and frugality can be enforced.

Why did these thoughts importunately recur to me in the present moment? They were the suggestions of a malignant genius, thoughts, the destination of which was to lead me into a gulph of misery and guilt! While I was going on in a regular train of expence, while I was scooping the mine that was to swallow me and my hopes together, I had the art to keep these reflections at bay.—Now that I had met with an unexpected piece of good-fortune, they rushed upon me with irresistible violence. Unfortunate coincidence! Miserable, rather let me say, guilty, abandoned miscreant!

As soon as I rose in the morning, I went to the closet where, the evening before, I had deposited my recent acquisitions. I spread out the gold before me. I gazed upon it with intentness. My eyes, a moment after, rolled in vacancy. I traversed the apartment with impatient steps. All the demon seemed to make his descent

upon my soul. This was the first time that I had ever felt the struggle of conscious guilt and dishonour. I was far indeed from anticipating that species of guilt, and that species of ruin, which soon after overwhelmed me. My mind did not once recur to the possibility of any serious mischief. I dwelt only, as gamesters perhaps usually do, upon the alternative between acquisition and no acquisition. I did not take into the account the ungovernableness of my own passions. I assumed it as unquestionable, that I could stop when I pleased. The thoughts that tortured me were, in the first place, those of a sanguine and unexperienced adventurer in a lottery, whose mind rests not for a moment upon the sum he has risked, but who, having in fancy the principal prize already in his possession, and having distributed it to various objects and purposes, sometimes fearfully recurs to the possibility of his disappointment, and anticipates with terror what will be his situation, if deprived of this imaginary wealth. I had now for the first time opened my eyes to the real state of my affairs, and I clung with proportionable vehemence to this plank which was to bear me from the storm. In the second place, I felt, though darkly and unwillingly, the immorality of my conception. To game, may, in some instances, not be in diametrical opposition to liberality of mind; but he who games for the express purpose of improving his circumstances, must be an idiot, if he does not sometimes recollect that the money lost may be as serious a mischief to his neighbour, as the money gained can possibly be a benefit to himself. It is past a question, that he who thus turns his amusement into his business, loses the dignity of a man of honour, and puts himself upon a level with the most avaricious and usurious merchant.

Though I was far from having digested a specific plan of enriching myself by these discreditable means, yet the *very tumult* of my thoughts operated strongly to lead me

once.

—once more to the gaming-table. I was in no humour to busy myself with my own thoughts; the calmness of literary discussion, and the polished interchange of wit, which had lately so much delighted me, had now no attraction for my heart; the turbulence of a scene of high play alone had power to distract my attention from the storm within. I won a second time. I felt the rapidity and intenseness of my contemplations still further accelerated. I will not over again detail what they were.— Suffice it to say, that my hopes became more ardent, my conception of the necessity of this resource more impressive, and my alarm lest this last expedient should fail me more tormenting.

The next time I lost half as much as the sum of my winnings. I then proceeded for several days in a nearly regular alteration of gain and loss. This, as soon as the fact unavoidably forced itself upon my mind, only served to render my thoughts more desperate. No, exclaimed I, it was not for this that I entered upon so tormenting a pursuit. It is not for this that I have deserted the learned societies which were lately my delight, and committed myself to a sea of disquiet and anxiety. I came not here like a boy for amusement; or like one who has been bred in the lap of ignorance and wealth, to seek a relief from the burthen of existence, and to find a stimulus to animate my torpid spirits. Am I then to be for ever baffled? Am I then to cultivate a tract of land, which is to present me nothing in return but unvaried barrenness? Am I continually to wind up my passions, and new-string my attention in vain? Am I a mere instrument to be played upon by endless hopes and fears and tormenting wishes? Am I to be the sport of events, the fool of promise, always agitated with near approaching good, yet always deluded?

This frame of mind led me on insensibly to the most extravagant adventures. It threw me in the first place
into

into the hands of notorious gamblers. Men of real property shrunk from the stakes I proposed, as, though they were in some degree infected with the venom of gaming, their infection was not so deep as mine, nor with my desperation of thought. The players with whom I engaged, were for the most part well known to every one but myself not to be able to pay the sums they played for, if they lost—nay, this fact might be said in some sense to be known to me as well as the rest, though I obstinately steeled myself against the recollection of it. One evening, I won of one of these persons a very large sum, for which I suffered him to play with me upon honour. The consequence was simple. The next morning he took his departure from Paris, and I heard of him no more.

Before this however the tide of success had set strongly against me. I had sustained some serious vicissitudes; and, while, I was playing with the wretch I have just mentioned, my eagerness increased as my good luck began, and I flattered myself that I should now avenge myself of fortune for some of her late unkindnesses. My anguish,—why should I call the thing by a disproportionate and trivial appellation!—my agony—was by so much the greater, when I found that this person, the very individual who had already stripped me of considerable sums, had disappeared, and left me without the smallest benefit from my imaginary winnings.

No man who has not felt, can possibly image to himself the tortures of a gamester, or a gamester like me, who played for the improvement of his fortune, who played with the recollection of a wife and children dearer to him than the blood that bubbled through the arteries of his heart, who might be said, like the savages of ancient Germany, to make these relations the stake for which he threw, who saw all my own happiness and all *theirs* through the long vista of life, depending on the

turn

turn of a card! Hell is but the chimera of priests, to bubble idiots and cowards. What have they invented, to come in competition with what I felt! Their alternate interchange of flames and ice, is but a feeble image of the eternal varieties of hope and fear. All bodily racks and torments are nothing compared with certain states of the human mind. The gamester would be the most pitiable, if he were not the most despicable, creature that exists. Arrange ten bits of painted paper in a certain order, and he is ready to go wild with the extravagance of his joy. He is only restrained by some remains of shame from dancing about the room, and displaying the vileness of his spirit by every sort of freak and absurdity. At another time, when his hopes have been gradually worked up into a paroxysm, an unexpected turn arrives; and he is made the most miserable of men. Never shall I cease to recollect the sensation I have repeatedly felt, in the instantaneous sinking of the spirits, the conscious fire that spread over my visage, the anger in my eye, the burning dryness of my throat, the sentiment that in a moment was ready to overwhelm with curses the cards, the stake, my own existence and all mankind. How every malignant and insufferable passion seemed to rush upon my soul! What nights of dreadful solitude and despair did I repeatedly pass during the progress of my ruin! It was the night of the soul! My mind was wrapped in a gloom that could not be pierced! My heart was oppressed with a weight, that no power, human or divine, was equal to remove! My eyelids seemed to press downward with an invincible burthen! My eyeballs were ready to start and crack their sockets! I lay motionless the victim of ineffable horror! The whole endless night seemed to be filled with one vast, appalling, immoveable idea! It was a stupour, more insupportable and tremendous, than the
utmost

utmost whirl of pain, or the fiercest agony of exquisite perception!

One day that my mind was in a state of excessive anguish and remorse (I had already contrived by this infernal means to dispossess myself of the half of my property), my son came unexpectedly into my chamber. For some time I had scarcely ever seen him: such is a gamester! All the night, while he slept, I was engaged in these haunts of demons. All the day, while he was awake, and studying with his masters, or amusing himself, I was in my bed-chamber, endeavouring to court a few broken hours of sleep. When, notwithstanding the opposition of our habits, I had the opportunity of seeing him, I rather shunned to use, than sought to embrace it. The sight of him had a savour of bitterness in it, that more than balanced all the solace of natural affection. It brought before me the image of his mother and his sisters; it presented to my soul a frightful tale of deserted duties; it was more galling and envenomed than the sting of scorpions.

Starting at the sound of the opening door, I called out abruptly and with some harshness, Who is there? What do you want?

It is I, Sir, replied the boy; it is Charles; come to pay his duty to you!

I do not want you now; you should not come but when you know I am at leisure; answered I somewhat disturbed.

Very well, Sir; very well: I am going. As he spoke, his voice seemed suffocated with tears. He was on the point of shutting the door, and leaving me to myself.

Charles, said I, not well knowing what it was I intended to do.

He returned.

Come here, my dear boy!

I took

I took his hand, I drew him between my knees, I hid my face in his neck, I shook with the violence of my emotion.

Go, go, boy : you perceive I cannot talk to you.

I pushed him gently from me.

Papa ! cried he, I do not like to leave you. I know I am but a boy, and can be but of little use to you. If mamma were with you, I would not be troublesome. I should cry, when I saw you were grieved, but I would ask no questions, and would leave you, because you desired it. I hope you have not had any bad news ?

No, my boy, no. Come to me to-morrow, and I will be at leisure, and will talk a great deal to you.

Ah, papa, to-morrow ! Every day that I did not see you, I thought it would be to-morrow ! And there was one to-morrow, and another to-morrow, and so many, that it seemed as if you had forgotten to speak to me at all.

Why, Charles, you do not doubt my word ? I tell you, that to-morrow you shall see me as long as you please.

Well, well, I will wait ! But do then let it be all day ! I will not go to college, and it shall be a holiday. Papa, I do not like my lessons half so well as I did, since I have neither you nor mamma that I can tell what they are about.

Good bye, Charles ! Be a good boy ! remember to-morrow ! Good bye !

Papa ! now I am sure you look a good deal better than you did at first. Let me tell you something about the lesson I read this morning. It was a story of Zaleucus the Locrian, who put out one of his own eyes, that he might preserve eye-sight to his son.

This artless story, thus innocently introduced, cut me to the soul. I started in my chair, and hid my face upon the table.

Papa, what is the matter ! Indeed you frighten me ?
Zaleucus was a father ! What then am I ?

Yes, Zaleucus was very good indeed ! But, do you know, his son was very naughty. It was his disobedience and wickedness, that made him liable to such a punishment. I would not for the world be like Zaleucus's son. I hope, papa, you will never suffer from my wilfulness. You shall not, papa, indeed, indeed !

I caught the boy in my arms. No, you are very good ! you are too good ! I cannot bear it !

Well, papa, I wish I were able to show you that I love you, as well as ever Zaleucus loved his son !

I was melted with the ingenuousness of the boy's expression. I quitted him. I paced up and down the room. Suddenly as if by a paroxysm of insanity I seized my child by the arm, I seated myself, I drew him towards me, I put my eye upon him.

Boy, how dare you talk to me of Zaleucus ? Do you mean to insinuate a reproach ? Do I not discharge a father's duty ? If I do not, know, urchin, I will not be insulted by my child !

The boy was astonished. He burst into tears and was silent.

I was moved by his evident distress. No, child, you have no father. I am afraid you have not. You do not know my baseness. You do not know that I am the deadliest foe you have in the world.

Dear papa, do not talk thus ! Do not I know that you are the best of men ? Do not I love you and mam-
~~ma~~ better than every body else put together ?

Well, Charles, cried I, endeavouring to compose myself, we will talk no more now. Did not I tell you, you should not come to me, but when you knew it was a proper time ? I hope you will never have reason to hate me.

I never will hate you, papa, do to me what you will !

He saw I wished to be alone, and left me,

CHAR.

CHAP. VI.

IN the evening of the same day, my beloved Marguerite arrived unexpectedly at Paris. In the beginning of our separation, I had been to the last degree punctual in my letters. I had no pleasure so great, as retiring to my closet, and pouring out my soul to the most adorable of women. By degrees I relaxed in punctuality. Ordinary occupations, however closely pursued, have a method in them, that easily combines with regularity in points of an incidental nature. But gaming, when pursued with avidity, subverts all order, and forces every avocation from the place assigned it. When my insane project of supplying the inadequateness of my fortune by this expedient began to produce an effect exactly opposite, I could not but with the extremest difficulty, string my mind to write to the mistress of my soul. I endeavoured not to think, with distinctness and attention, of the persons whose happiness was most nearly involved with mine. I said to myself, yet another venture must be tried—fortune shall change the animosity with which she has lately pursued me—I will repair the breaches that have been sustained—and I shall then return with tenfold avidity to subjects that at present I dare not fix my mind upon. My letters were accordingly short, unfrequent and unsatisfactory—and those of Marguerite discovered increasing anguish, perturbation and anxiety. What a change in the minds of both had the lapse of a few months produced ! Not that my attachment had suffered the diminution of a single particle ; but that attachment, which had lately been the source of our mutual felicity, was now fraught only with distress. My mind was filled with horrors ; and Marguerite expected from me an encouragement and consolation in absence, which, alas, I had it not in my power to give !

I had

I had now continued in Paris for a time vastly greater than I had originally proposed. After having remained more than ten days without receiving one word of intelligence, a letter of mine was delivered to Marguerite, more short, mysterious and distressing to her feelings, than any that had preceded. The ten days silence, from me who at first had never missed an opportunity of pouring out my soul to her, and contributing to her pleasure, was exquisitely painful. There is scarcely any thing that produces such a sickness of the heart, as the repeated prorogation of hope. But, when the letter arrived that had been so anxiously looked for, when the hand writing of the superscription was recognized, when the letter was treasured up for the impatiently desired moment of solitude, that the sacred emotions of the heart might suffer no interruption, and when it at last appeared so cold, so ominous, so withering to the buds of affection, the determination of Marguerite was speedily formed. The relations that bound us together were of too mighty a value, to be dispensed or to be trifled with.— She felt them as the very cords of existence. For ten years she had known no solace that was disconnected from my idea, no care but of our own happiness and that of our offspring. Benevolent she was almost beyond human example, and interested for the welfare of all she knew—but these were brief and mutable concerns—they were not incorporated with the stamina of her existence. I was the whole world to her—she had no idea of satisfaction without me. Her firmness had been sufficiently tried by the interposal of separation and absence. How was she to interpret the obscurity that had now arisen? Had I forgotten my family and my wife? Had I been corrupted and debauched by that Paris, the effects of which upon my character her father had so deeply apprehended? Had I in contempt of every thing sacred, *entered into some new attachment?* Had the attractions

tions of some new beauty in the metropolis, made me indifferent to the virtue of my children, and the life of their mother? Perhaps the length of our attachment had infected me with satiety, and the inconstancy of my temper had been roused by the charms of novelty. Perhaps the certainty of her kindness and regard had no longer allurements for me; and I might be excited to the pursuit of another by the pleasures of hope combined with uncertainty, and of a coyness, that seemed to promise compliance hereafter, even while it pronounced a present denial. These were the images that haunted her mind; they engendered all the wildness, and all the torments, of a delirious paroxysm; she resolved that no time should be sacrificed to needless uncertainty, and that no effort of hers should be unexerted to prevent the mischief she feared.

It was evening when she arrived. I was upon the point of repairing to that scene of pightly resort, the source of all my guilt and all my miseries. I enquired of my son's valet, where he was, and how he had been in the course of the day. He was gone to bed: he had appeared unusually sad, sometimes in tears; and, while he was undressing, had sighed deeply two or three times. While I was collecting this account in my own apartment, the gates of the hotel opened, and a number of horsemen entered the court yard. I was somewhat surprised; because, though I was accustomed to see much company, few of my acquaintance visited me at so late an hour, except on the evenings appropriated to receive them. I crossed the saloon to enquire. One of the servants exclaimed, It is Bernardin's voice; it must be my mistress that is come!

Nothing could be further from my mind than the thought of her arrival. I flew through the passage; I was on the spot, the moment that the servant prepared to conduct his mistress from the litter; I received Mar-
guerite

guerite in my arms, and led her into the house. If I had expected her arrival, I should infallibly have met her at this moment with anxiety and confusion; I should have gone round the circle of my thoughts, and should not have had confidence to encounter the beam of her eye. But the event was so unexpected as to drive all other ideas from my mind; and, in consequence, I enjoyed several minutes,—ages, rather let me say,—of the sincerest transport. I kissed the mistress of my soul with extasy; I gazed upon her well known lineaments and features; I listened to the pleasing melody of her voice; I was intoxicated with delight. Upon occasions like this, it seems as if every former joy that had marked the various periods of intercourse, distilled its very spirit and essence, to compose a draught, ten times more delicious and refined than had ever before been tasted. Our meeting was like awaking from the dead; it was the emancipation of the weary captive, who exchanges the dungeon's gloom for the lustre of the morning, and who feels a celestial exhilaration of heart, the very memory of which had been insensibly wearing away from his treacherous brain. All my senses partook of the rapture. Marguerite seemed to shed ambrosial odours round her; her touch was thrilling; her lips were nectar; her figure was that of a descended deity!

Her pleasure was not less than mine. It is indeed absurd, it may be termed profanation, to talk of solitary pleasure. No sensation ordinarily distinguished by that epithet, can endure the test of a moment's inspection, when compared with a social enjoyment. It is then only that a man is truly pleased, when pulse replies to pulse, when the eyes discourse eloquently to each other, when in responsive tones and words the soul is communicated. Altogether, we are conscious of a sober, a chaste and dignified intoxication, an elevation of spirit, that *does not bereave the mind of itself, and that endures*
long

long enough for us to analyse and savour the causes of our joy.

For some time we rested on a sofa, each filled and occupied with the observation of the other. My eyes assured Marguerite of the constancy of my affection; my kisses were those of chaste, undivided, entire attachment.

Our words were insignificant and idle, the broken and incoherent phrases of a happiness that could not be silent. At length Marguerite exclaimed, It is enough; My fears are vanished; I have no questions to ask, no doubts to remove. Yet why, my Reginald, did you suffer those doubts to gather, those fears to accumulate? Surely you knew the singleness of my affection! How many painful days and hours might you have saved me, almost by a word!

Forgive me, my love, replied I! Waste not the golden hour of meeting in recrimination! Feeling, as your angelic goodness now makes me feel, I wonder at myself, that I could for one moment have consented to a separation; that I could have thought any thing but this, existence; or that, having experienced the joys that you have bestowed, I could lose all image of the past, and, dwelling in a desert, imagine it paradise!

Recrimination! rejoined Marguerite. No, my love, you make me too happy, to leave room for any thing but gratitude and affection! Forgive me, Reginald, if I pretend that, in meeting you thus, I find myself your superior in happiness and love. You only awake from lethargy, forgetfulness of yourself and—of me; but I awake from anguish, a separation, that I desired not at first, and of which I hourly wished to see an end, from doubts that would intrude, and refused to be expelled, from the incessant contemplation and regret of a felicity, once possessed, but possessed no longer! Melancholy ideas, gloomy prognostics overspread my sleepless nights,
and

and bedewed my pillow with tears! This it is, that, at last, has driven me from my family and daughters, resolved to obtain the certainty of despair, or the dispersion of my fears! Have I known all this, and think you that I do not enjoy with rapture this blissful moment?

While we were thus conversing, Charles entered the room. He was not yet asleep when his mother arrived; he heard her voice; and hastened to put on his clothes, that he might rush into her arms. The pleasure Marguerite had conceived from our meeting, and the affectionate serenity that had taken possession of her soul, infused double ardour into the embraces she bestowed on her son. He gazed earnestly in her face; he kissed her with fervency; but was silent.

Why, Charles! said she, what is the matter with you? Are not you glad to see me?

That I am, mamma! So glad, that I do not know what to do with myself! I was afraid I never should be glad again!

Pooh, boy! what do you mean? You were not mother sick, were you?

Yes, indeed, I was sick, sick at heart! not that I am a coward! I think that I could have been satisfied to have been without either my father or you for a little while. But papa is so altered, you cannot think! He never smiles and looks happy; and, when I see him, instead of making me joyful, as it used to do, it makes me sad!

Dear Reginald! replied the mother, looking at me; is it possible that, while my heart was haunted with fear and suspicions, separation alone should have such an effect on you?

I dare say it was that! interposed the boy. I could not make papa smile, all I could do: but now you are come, he will soon be well! How much he must love you, mamma?

The artless prattle of my son struck anguish to my soul, and awakened a whole train of tormenting thoughts.—Alas! thought I, can it indeed be love, that thus contrives against the peace of its object? Would to God, my child! that my thoughts were as simple and pure as thy innocent bosom!

And yet, added the boy, as if recollecting himself, if he could not see you, sure that was no reason for him to avoid me? He seemed as much afraid of me, as I have seen some of my play-fellows of a snake! Indeed, mamma, it was a sad thing that, when I wanted him to kiss me and press me to his bosom, he shrunk away from me! There now! it was just so, as he looks now, that papa used to frown upon me, I cannot tell how often! Now is not that ugly, mamma?

I could no longer govern the tumult of my thoughts. Peace, urchin! cried I. Why did you come to mar the transport of our meeting? Just now, Marguerite, I forgot myself, and was happy! Now all the villain rises in my soul!

My wife was so astonished at the perturbation of my manner, and at the words I uttered, that she was scarcely able to articulate. Reginald! in broken accents she exclaimed—my love!—my husband!

No matter! said I. It shall yet be well! My heart assures me, it shall!—be not disturbed my love! I will never cause you a moment's anguish! I would sooner die a thousand deaths!—Forget the odious thoughts that poor Charles has excited in me so unseasonably! They were mere idle words! depend upon it they were!

While I was speaking, Marguerite hid her face upon the sofa. I took her hand, and by my caresses endeavoured to soothe and compose her. At length turning to me:

Reginald! said she, in a voice of anguish, do you then endeavour to hide from me the real state of your thoughts

thoughts? Was the joy that attended our meeting, perishable and deceitful? After ten years of unbounded affection and confidence, am I denied to be the partner of your bosom?

No Marguerite, no! this was but the thought of a moment! by to-morrow's dawn it shall have no existence in my bosom. Why should I torment you with what so soon shall have no existence to myself? Meanwhile, be assured, my love (instead of suffering diminution) is more full, more fervent and entire, than it ever was!

At this instant my mind experienced an extraordinary impression. Instead of being weaned, by the presence of this admirable woman, from my passion for gaming, it became stronger than ever. If Charles had not entered at the critical moment he did, I should have remained with Marguerite, and, amidst the so long untasted solace of love, have, at least for this night, forgotten my cares. But that occurrence had overturned every thing, had uncovered the wounds of my bosom, and awakened conceptions that refused to be laid to sleep again. The arms of my wife, that were about to embrace me, suddenly became to me a nest of scorpions. I could as soon have rested and enjoyed myself upon the top of Vesuvius, when it flamed. New as I was to this species of anguish, tranquilly and full of virtuous contentment as I had hitherto passed the years of my married state, the pangs of a guilty conscience I was wholly unable to bear. I rose from my seat, and was upon the point of quitting the room.

Marguerite perceived by my manner that there was something extraordinary passing in my mind. Where are you going, Reginald? said she.

I answered with a slight nod.—Not far, I replied, attempting an air of apathy and unconcern.

She was not satisfied. You are not going out? She enquired.

I returned.

I returned to where I had been sitting. My love, I was going out at the moment of your arrival. It is necessary I assure you. I hope I shall soon be back. I am sorry I am obliged to leave you. Compose yourself. You are in want of rest and had better go to bed.

Stop, Reginald! afford me a minute's leisure before you depart! Leave us, Charles! Good night, my dear boy! Kiss me—remember that your mother is now in the same house with you—and sleep in peace.

The boy quitted the room.

Reginald! said the mother, I have no wish to controul your desires, or be a spy upon your actions. But your conduct seems so extraordinary in this instance, as to dispencc me from the observation of common rules. I have always been a complying wife—I have never set myself in contradiction to your will; I appeal to yourself for the truth of this. I dispise however those delicacies, an adherence to which would entail upon us the sacrifice of all that is most valuable in human life. Can I shut my ears upon the mysterious expressions which Charles's complaints have extorted from you? Can I be insensible to the extraordinary purpose you declare of leaving me, when I have yet been scarcely half an hour under the roof with you? Before Charles came in, you seemed to have entertained no such design.

My love, replied I how seriously you comment upon the most insignificant incident! Is it extraordinary that your unexpected arrival should at first have made me forget an engagement that I now recollect?

St. Leon, answered my wife, before you indulge in surprise at my earnestness, recollect the circumstances that immediately preceded it. Through successive weeks I have waited for some satisfactory and agreeable intelligence from you. I had a right before this to have expected your return. Uncertainty and a thousand fearful apprehensions have at length driven me from my home,
and

and brought me to Paris. I am come here for satisfaction to my doubts, and peace to my anxious heart. Wonder not therefore, if you find something more earnest and determined in my proceedings now, than upon ordinary occasions. Give me, I conjure you, give me ease and relief, if you are able ! If not, at least allow me this consolation, to know the worst !

Be pacified. Marguerite ! I rejoined. I am grieved. Heaven knows how deeply grieved, to have occasioned you a moment's pain. But since you lay so much stress upon this circumstance, depend upon it, I will postpone the business I was going about, and stay with you.

This concession, voluntary and sincere, produced an effect that I had not foreseen. Marguerite gazed for a moment in my face, and then threw herself upon my neck.

Forgive me, my beloved husband ! she cried. You indeed make me ashamed of myself. I feel myself inexcusable. I feel that I have been brooding over imaginary evils, and creating the misery that corroded my heart. How inexpressibly you rise my superior ! But I will conquer my weakness. I insist upon your going to the engagement you have made, and will henceforth place the most entire confidence in your prudence and honour.

Every word of this speech was a dagger to my heart. What were my feelings, while this admirable woman was taking shame to herself for her suspicions, and pouring out her soul in commendation of my integrity ! I looked inward, and found every thing there the reverse of her apprehension, a scene of desolation and remorse. I embraced her in silence. My heart panted upon her bosom, and seemed bursting with a secret that it was death to reveal. I ought, in return for her generosity, to have given up my feigned engagement, and devoted this night at least to console and pacify her. But I could *not*, and I dared not. The wound of my bosom was
opened

opened, and would not be closed. The more I loved her for her confidence, the less I could endure myself in her presence. To play the hypocrite for so many hours, to assume a face of tranquility and joy, while all within was tumult and horror, was a task too mighty for human powers to execute. I accepted of Marguerite's permission, and left her. Even in the short interval before I quitted the house, my carriage was near to betraying me. I could perceive her watchful of my countenance, as if again suspicious that some fatal secret lurked in my mind. She said nothing further upon the subject however, and I presently escaped the inquisition of her eye.

It is scarcely necessary to describe the state of my mind as I passed along the streets. It is sufficient to say that every thing I had felt before from the passion of gaming, was trivial to the sensations that now occupied me. Now first it stood confessed before me, a demon that poisoned all my joys, that changed the transport of a meeting with the adored of my soul into anguish, that drove me forth from her yet untasted charms a solitary wanderer on the face of the earth. My busy soul drew forth at length the picture of what this encounter would have been, if it had been sanctified with the stamp of conscious innocence. At one moment I felt myself the most accursed of mankind; I believed that he who could find, as I did, barrenness and blasting in the choicest of heaven's blessings, must be miserable beyond precedent or hope. Shortly after however, I reviewed again the image of my poison, and found in it the promise of a cure. The more desperate my case appeared to me, with the greater insanity of expectation did I assure myself that this one night should retrieve all my misfortunes. In giving to it this destination indeed, I should afflict the gentle bosom of my wife but too probably with some hours of uneasiness. But the
event

event would richly repay her for so transitory a suffering. I would then open my whole mind to her. I would practise no more reserves; I should no longer be driven to the refuge of a vile hypocrisy. I would bid farewell to the frowns and the caresses of fortune. I would require of her no further kindnesses. If I were incapable myself of a rigid economy, I would commit implicitly to Marguerite the disposal of my income, whom I knew to be every way qualified for the office. With these reflections I nerved my mind to the most decisive adventures.

Why should I enter into a long detail of the incidents of this crisis? Soon, though not immediately, I began to lose considerable sums. I brought with me in the first instance a penetrating eye, a collected mind, an intellect prepared for unintermitted exertion. Misfortune subverted all this. My eye grew wild, my soul tempestuous, my thoughts incoherent and distracted. I was incapable of any thing judicious; but I was determined to persevere. I played till morning, nor could the light of morning induce me to desist. The setting sun of that day beheld me a beggar!

There is a degree of misery, which, as it admits of no description, so does it leave no distinct traces in the memory. It seems as if the weakness of the human mind alike incapacitated it to support the delirium of joy, and the extremity of sorrow. Of what immediately succeeded the period to which I have conducted my narrative, I have no recollection, but a horror beyond all names of horror, wild, inexplicable, unintelligible. Let no one however imagine that the temporary desertion of the soul is any alleviation of its misery. The mind that sinks under its suffering, does not by that conduct shake off its burthen. Rather, ten thousand times rather, would I endure all the calamities that have ever yet received a name, the sensations and history of which are capable

capable of being delineated, than sustain that which has no words by which to express itself, and the conception of which must be trusted solely to the faculties and sympathy of the reader. Where is the cold and inapprehensive spirit that talks of madness as a refuge from sorrow? Oh, dull and unconceiving beyond all belief! I cannot speak of every species of madness; but I also have been mad! This I know, that there is a vacancy of soul, where all appears buried in stupidity, and scarcely deserves the name of thought, that is more intolerable than the bitterest reflections. This I know, that there is an incoherence, in which the mind seems to wander without rudder and pilot, that laughs to scorn the superstitious fictions of designing priests. Oh, how many sleepless days and weeks did I endure! the thoughts frantic, the tongue raving! While we can still adhere, if I may so express myself, to the method of misery, there is a sort of nameless complacency that lurks under all that we can endure. We are still conscious that we are men—we wonder at and admire our powers of being miserable. But, when the masts and tackle of the intellectual vessel are all swept away, then is the true sadness. We have no consciousness to sustain us, no sentiment of dignity, no secret admiration of what we are, still clinging to our hearts.

All this I venture to affirm, with the full recollection of what I suffered when restored to my senses, present to my mind.

When the account was closed, and the loss of my last stake had finished the scene, I rose, and, quitting the fatal spot where these transactions had passed, entered the street, with a heart oppressed, and a bursting head. My eyes glared, but I saw nothing, and could think of nothing. It was already nearly dark—and the day which had been tempestuous, was succeeded by a heavy and settled rain. I wandered for some time, not knowing whither
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ther I went. My pace which had at first been slow, gradually increased, and I traversed the whole city with a hurried and impatient step. The streets which had contained few persons at first, gradually lost those few. I was almost alone. I saw occasionally ragged and houseless misery shrinking under the cover of a miserable shed—I saw the midnight robber, watching for his prey, and ready to start upon the unwary passenger.—From me he fled—there was something in my air that impelled even desperate violation to shrink from the encounter. I continued this incessant, unmeaning exertion for hours. At length, by an accidental glance of the eye, I found myself at the gate of my own hotel. Heedless of what I did, I entered: and, as nature was now completely exhausted with me, sunk down in a sort of insensibility at the foot of the grand stair case.

This stupour after a considerable interval gradually subsided. I opened my eyes, and saw various figures flitting about me; but I seemed to myself equally incapable of collecting my thoughts, and of speech. My understanding indeed shortly became clearer, but an insuperable reluctance to voluntary exertion hung upon me. I explained myself only in monosyllables; a sort of instinctive terror of disclosing what had passed, to the admirable woman I had sacrificed, maintained in me this perpetual reserve. For several days together I sat from morning till night in one immovable posture, nor was any thing of force enough to awaken me to exertion.

CHAP. VII.

IT was not long before the unhappy partner of my fortunes was informed of what had passed. The wretches *who had stripped me of my all, soon made their appearance*

ance to claim what was no longer mine. What would have been their reception, if I had sufficiently possessed myself to parley with them on the subject, I am unable to determine. I could not have preserved the wreck of my property from their grasp but at the expense of an indelible stain upon my honour; yet my desperation would probably have led me to a conduct equally extravagant and useless. In the condition in which I was, the whole direction of the business devolved upon Marguerite; and never did human creature demean herself with greater magnanimity and propriety. She saw at once that she could not resist their claims but at the expence of my reputation—for herself she valued not riches, and had no dread of poverty—and, thus circumstanced, she had the courage herself to bring to me the papers they offered, the object of which I scarcely understood, and to cause me to annex that signature which was to strip her and her children of all earthly fortune. Her purpose was, as soon as this business was over, to cause us to quit France, and retire into some scene of virtuous obscurity. But she would not leave behind her for the last descendants of the counts de St. Leon any avoidable disgrace. Her mode of reasoning upon the subject was extremely simple. Obscurity she regarded as no misfortune; and eminent situation, where it fairly presented itself, as a responsibility it would be base to shrink from: ignominy alone she considered as the proper theme of abhorrence. For the fickleness and inconstancy of fortune it is impossible to answer; by one of those reverses in which she appears to delight, she might yet restore us to the lustre of our former condition; but, if the name of St. Leon was henceforth to disappear from the annals of France, she was desirous at least, as far as depended on her, that it should expire, like the far-famed bird of Arabia, in the midst of perfumes.

When the whole situation of Marguerite is taken into consideration, the reader, like myself, will stand astonished at the fortitude of her conduct. She had come to Paris, unable any longer to tranquilise the agitation of her mind, and exhausted with fears, suspicions and alarms. When she arrived, she experienced indeed one delusive moment of transport and joy. But that was soon over. It was succeeded by reflections and conjectures respecting the mysteriousness of my behaviour; it was succeeded by my unexpected departure, and the hourly expectation of my return. After the lapse of a night and a day, I returned indeed, but in what a condition? Drenched with rain, trembling with inanition, speechless and alone. Scarcely had she received notice of my arrival, and come forward to meet me, than she saw me fall, motionless and insensible, at her feet. She watched my recovery, and hung with indescribable expectation over my couch. She was only called away by the wretches who came to advance their accursed claims, and to visit her with the intelligence of our ruin, as with a thunderbolt. Already enfeebled and alarmed by all the preceding circumstances, they spoke with no consideration to her weakness, they stooped to no qualifications and palliatives, but disclosed the whole in the most abrupt and shocking manner. Any other woman would have sunk under this accumulation of ill. Marguerite only borrowed vigour from her situation, and rose in proportion to the pressure of the calamity. She took her resolution at once, and answered them in the most firm and decisive language.

The period of inactivity and stupour that at first seized me, was succeeded by a period of frenzy. It was in this condition that Marguerite conducted me and my children to an obscure retreat in the canton of Soleure in the republic of Switzerland. Cheapness was the first object; for the most miserable pittance was all she had saved.

saved from the wreck of our fortune. She had not chosen for beauty of situation, or magnificence of prospects. The shock her mind had sustained was not so great as to destroy her activity and fortitude, but it left her little leisure for the wantonness of studied indulgence. The scene was remote and somewhat sterile. She conceived that, when I recovered my senses, an event which she did not cease to promise herself, solitude would be most grateful, at least to the first stage of my returning reason.

Hither then it was that she led me, our son and three daughters. Immediately upon our arrival she purchased a small and obscure, but neat cottage, and attired herself and her children in habits similar to those of the neighbouring peasants. My paternal estates, as well as those which had fallen to me by marriage, had all been swallowed up in the gulph which my accursed conduct had prepared. Marguerite made a general sale of our moveables, our ornaments, and even our cloathes. A few books, guided by the attachment to literature which had always attended me, were all that she saved from the wreck. A considerable part of the sum thus produced was appropriated by my creditors. Marguerite had the prudence and skill to satisfy them all, and was contented to retain that only which remained when their demands were discharged. This was the last dictate of her pride and the high-born integrity of her nature, at the time that she thus departed a voluntary exile from her native country. Two servants accompanied us in our flight, whose attachment was so great, that even if their attendance had not been necessary, it would have been found somewhat difficult to shake them off. Marguerite however was governed by the strictest principles of economy—and, whatever the struggle might have been with the importunity of humble affection in dismissing these last remains of our profuse and luxurious household, she would have thought herself obliged to
proceed

proceed even to this extreme, if judicious parsimony had demanded it from her. But it did not. Our youngest daughter was at this time only twelve months old, and it would have been scarcely possible for the mother, however resolute in her exertions, to have discharged the cares due to such a family, at a time when the father of it was suffering under so heavy an affliction. One female servant she retained to assist her in these offices. She could not dispense herself from a very assiduous attention to me. She could never otherwise have been satisfied, that every thing was done that ought to be done, that that every tenderness was exercised that might be demanded by my humiliating situation, or that sufficient sagacity and skill were employed in watching and encouraging the gleams of returning reason. The violence of my paroxysms however was frequently such as to render a manual force greater than hers, necessary to prevent me from effecting some desperate mischief. Bernardin a trusty servant, nearly of my own age, and who had attended upon my person almost from infancy, was retained by Marguerite for this purpose. I was greatly indebted for the recovery which speedily followed, to the affectionate anxiety and enlightened care of this incomparable woman. It is inconceivable to those who have never been led to a practical examination of the subject, how much may be effected in this respect by an attachment ever on the watch, and an understanding judicious to combine, where hired attendance would sleep, and the coarseness of a blunt insensibility would irritate, nay perhaps mortally injure.

It is scarcely possible to imagine a wife more interesting and admirable than Marguerite appeared upon the present occasion. Fallen from the highest rank to the lowest poverty, she did not allow herself a mean and pitiful regret. No reverse could be more complete and abrupt, but she did not sink under it. She proved in
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the most convincing manner, that her elevation was not the offspring of wealth or rank, but was properly her own. She gave a grace, even a lustre, to poverty, which it can only receive from the emanations of a cultivated mind. Her children were reconciled and encouraged by her example, and soon forgot those indulgencies which had not yet had time to emasculate their spirits. The deplorable situation to which the father of the family was reduced, was far from inducing her to cease from her efforts in the bitterness of despair. She determined for the present to be both a father and a mother to her children.—She looked forward with confidence to my speedy recovery. Though I was the author of her calamities, she did not permit this consideration to subtract from the purity of her affection, or the tenderness of her anxiety. She resolved that no word or look of hers should ever reproach me with my misconduct. She had been accustomed to desire rank, and affluence, and indulgence for her children—that her son might run the career of glory which his fore-fathers ran, and that her daughters might unite their fates with what was most illustrious and honourable in their native country. But, if she were disappointed in this, she was determined, as far as it should be in her power, to give them virtue and cheerfulness and content, a mind, that should find resources within itself, and call forth regard and esteem from the rest of mankind.

My recovery was fitful and precarious, sometimes appearing to be rapidly on the advance, and at others to threaten a total relapse. Among the expedients that Marguerite employed to re-excite the slumbering spark of reason, was that of a paternal affection. Ever on the watch for a favourable opportunity, she sometimes brought to me her own little namesake, who, though only twelve months old, did not fail to discover unequivocal marks of that playfulness and gaiety which made so considera-

be a part of her constitutional character. Her innocent smiles, her frolic and careless laughter, produced a responsive vibration that reached to my inmost heart. They were not unfrequently, powerful enough, to check the career of my fury, or to raise me from the lowest pitch of despondence. Julia wept for me, and Louisa endeavoured to copy the offices of kindness she was accustomed to see her mother perform: Charles, who conceived more fully than the rest the nature of my indisposition, was upon all occasions solicitous to be admitted into my presence, and attended me for the most part with speechless anxiety, while his watchful, glistening eye uttered volumes, without the assistance of words. His mother at length yielded to his importunity, and he became established the regular assistant of Bernardin in the care of my person. The restlessness and impetuosity he had hitherto manifested, seemed upon this occasion entirely to subside; hour after hour he willingly continued shut up in my chamber, eager for every opportunity of usefulness, and gratified with that complacency with which the human mind never fails to be impressed, when it regards its actions as beneficent, or approves its temper as compassionate.

The restoration of my health was greatly retarded by the melancholy impressions which necessarily offered themselves to my mind, when recollection resumed her seat. It was fortunate for me that this sort of retrospection appears not to be the first thing that occurs after a paroxysm of insanity. When the tide of incoherent ideas subsides, the soul is left in a state of exhaustion, and seems, by a sort of instinct, to shun the influx of tumultuous emotions, and to dwell upon such feelings as are mild, tranquil and restorative. Once however, when I was nearly recovered, the thought of what I had been, and the recollection of what I was, violently suggesting themselves to my mind, brought on a relapse attended

tended with more alarming and discouraging symptoms than my original alienation. At that moment Marguerite was for the first time irresistibly struck with the conception that mine was an incurable lunacy; and, as she afterwards assured me, at no period down to that instant, had she felt herself so truly inconsolable. But even a sentiment of the last despair was incapable of succeeding the active beneficence of Marguerite. Her assuages, so far as related to this fatal calamity, were at length crowned with success. Her gloomy prognostics were not realised, and the distemper of my understanding quitted me for ever.

Wretched however, as I have already remarked, beyond all common notions of wretchedness, were my thoughts, when my soul returned to its proper bias, and fully surveyed the nature of my present situation. Marguerite, who, by her sagacity and patience, had recovered me from a state of the most dreadful disease, now exerted herself to effect the more arduous task of reconciling me to myself. She assured me that she loved me from her inmost heart; nay, that she was thankful to providence, which, in the midst of what the world calls great calamities, had preserved to her what she most valued, my affection, entire. She contrasted what had been the subject of her apprehensions before she came to Paris, with what had proved to be the state of the case afterwards. She averred, that the worst that had happened was trivial and tolerable, compared with the notion that her fears had delineated. She had feared to find my heart alienated from her, and herself a widowed mother to orphan children. She dreaded lest I should have proved myself worthless in her eyes, lest I should have been found to have committed to oblivion the most sacred of all my duties, and, for the gratification of a low and contemptible caprice, sacrificed all pretensions to honour and character. For that indeed her heart would have
bled;

bled; against that all the pride she derived from her ancestry and my own would have revolted—that would have produced a revulsion of her frame, snapping the chain of all her habits, and putting a violent close upon all the sentiments she had most fondly nourished. She dreaded indeed that she should not have survived it.— But the mistake I had committed was of a very different nature. I had neither forgotten that I was a husband nor a father—I had only made an injudicious and unfortunate choice of the way of discharging what was due to these characters. What had passed was incapable of impeaching either the constancy of my affections, or the integrity of my principles. She forgave me, and it was incumbent upon me to forgive myself.

She assured me that poverty, in her apprehension, was a very slight evil, and she appealed to my own understanding for the soundness of her judgment. She bid me look round upon the peasantry of the neighbourhood, upon a footing with whom we were now placed, and ask my own heart whether they were not happy. One disadvantage indeed they were subject to, the absence of cultivation and learning. She could never bring herself to believe that ignorance was a benefit; she saw the contrary of this practically illustrated in her own case, in mine, and in that of all the persons to whom through life she had been most ardently attached. She wished her children to attain intellectual refinement, possess fully the attributes of a rational nature, and to be as far removed as possible from the condition of stocks and stones, by accumulating a magazine of thoughts and by a rich and cultivated sensibility. But the want of fortune did not in our case, as in the case of so many others, shut them out from this advantage: it was in our own power to bestow it upon them.

It was the part of a reasonable man, she told me, not to waste his strength in useless regrets for what was
past,

past, and had already eluded his grasp; but to advert to the blessings he had still in possession. If we did this in our present situation, we should find every reason for contentment and joy. Our pleasure in each other, and the constancy of our attachment, was unassailed and unimpaired. Where were there two married persons, she would venture to ask, who had more reason to applaud their connection, or to whom their connection was pregnant with so various gratifications? From ourselves, we had only to turn our thoughts to our children—and we were surely as singularly fortunate in this respect, as in each other. Charles, who had always been the subject of our pride, had lately exhibited such an example of patient sympathy and filial affection, as perhaps had never been equalled in a child so young. The sensibility of Julia, the understanding of Louisa, and the vivacity of Marguerite, were all of them so many growing sources of inexhaustible delight. Our children were intelligent, affectionate and virtuous. Thus circumstanced, she intreated me not to indulge that jaundice of the imagination, which should create to itself a sentiment of melancholy and discontent in the midst of this terrestrial paradise.

Most virtuous of women, now perhaps the purest and the brightest among the saints in heaven! why was I deaf to the soundness of your exhortations, and the generosity of your sentiments? Deaf indeed I was! A prey to the deepest dejection, they appeared to me the offspring of misapprehension and paradox! Supposing in the mean time that they were reasonable and just in the mouth of her who uttered them, I felt them as totally foreign to my own situation. The language, as they were, of innocence, it was not wonderful that to an innocent heart they spoke tranquility and peace. Marguerite looked round upon the present rusticity and plainness of our condition, and every thing that she saw

talked to her of her merit and her worth. If we were reduced, she was in no way accountable for that reduction—it had been the test of her magnanimity, her patience, and the immutableness of her virtue. She smiled at the assaults of adversity, and felt a merit in her smiles. How different was my situation ! Every thing that I saw reminded me of my guilt, and upbraided me with crimes that it was hell to recollect. My own garb, and that of my wife and children, the desertion in which we lived, the simple benches, the unhewn rafters, the naked walls, all told me what it was I had done, and were so many echoes to my conscience, repeating, without intermission and without end, its heart-breaking reproaches. Sleep was almost a stranger to me—these incessant monitors confounded my senses in a degree scarcely short of madness itself. It is the property of vice to convert every thing that should be consolation, into an additional source of anguish. The beauty, the capacity and the virtue of my children, the affection with which they regarded me, the patience and attentiveness and forbearance of their excellent mother, were all so many aggravations of the mischief I had perpetrated. I could almost have wished to have been the object of their taunts and execration. I could have wished to have been disengaged from the dearest charities in our nature, and to have borne the weight of my crimes alone. It would have been a relief to me, if my children had been covered with the most loathsome diseases, deformed and monstrous. It would have been a relief to me, if they had been abortive in understanding, and odious in propensities, if their hearts had teemed with every vice, and every day had marked them the predestined victims of infamy. The guilt of having stripped them of every external faculty would then have set light upon me. But *thus to have ruined the most lovely family perhaps that existed on the face of the earth, the most exemplary of* women,

women, and children in whom I distinctly marked the bud of every excellence and every virtue, was a conduct that I could never forgive even to myself. Oh, Damville, Damville! best of men! truest of friends! why didst thou put thy trust in such a wretch as I am! Hadst thou no presentiment of the fatal consequences? Wast thou empowered to commit thy only child and all her possible offspring to so dreadful risk? Indeed it was not well done! It was meant in kindness—but it was the cruellest mischief that could have been inflicted on me. I was not a creature qualified for such dear and tender connections. I was destined by nature to wander a solitary outcast on the face of the earth. For that only, that fearful misery, was I fitted. Why, misguided, misjudging man! didst thou not leave me to my fate? Even that would have been less dreadful than what I have experienced! Wretch that I am! Why do I reproach my best benefactor? No, let me turn the whole current of my invective upon myself! Damville was actuated by the noblest and most generous sentiment that ever entered the human mind. What a return then have I made, and to what a benefit!

All the previous habits of my mind had taught me to feel my present circumstances with the utmost acuteness. Marguerite, the generous Marguerite, stood, with a soul almost indifferent, between the opposite ideas of riches and poverty. Not so her husband. I had been formed by every accident of my life, to the love of splendour. High, heroic feats, and not the tranquillity of rural retirement, or the pursuits of a character professedly literary, had been the food of my imagination, ever since the faculty of imagination was unfolded in my mind. The field of the cloth of gold, the siege and the battle of Pavia, were ever present to my recollection. Francis the First, Bayard and Bourbon eternally formed the subject of my visions and reveries. These propensities had
indeed

indeed degenerated into an infantine taste for magnificence and expense; but the roots did not embrace their soil the less forcibly, because the branches were pressed down and diverted from their genuine perpendicular. That from a lord, descended from some of the most illustrious houses in France, and myself amply imbued with the high and disdainful spirit incident to my rank, I should become a peasant, was itself a sufficient degradation. But I call the heavens to witness that I could have endured this with patience, if I had endured it alone. I should have regarded it as the just retribution of my follies, and submitted with the most exemplary resignation. But I could not with an equal mind behold my wife and children involved in my punishment. I turned my eyes upon the partner of my life, and recalled with genuine anguish the magnificence to which she was accustomed, and the hopes to which she was born. I looked upon my children, the fruit of my loins, and once the pride of my heart, and recollected that they were paupers, rustics, exiles. I could foresee no return to rank, but for them and their posterity an interminable succession of obscurity and meanness. A real parent can support the calamity of personal degradation, but he cannot bear to witness and anticipate this corruption of his blood. At some times I honoured Marguerite for her equanimity. At others I almost despised her for this integrity of her virtues. I accused her in my heart of being destitute of the spark of true nobility. Her patience I considered as little less than meanness and vulgarity of spirit. It would have become her better, I thought, like me, to have cursed her fate, and the author of that fate; like me, to have spurned indignant at the slavery to which which we were condemned; to have refused to be pacified, and to have wasted the last dregs of existence in impatience and regret. I could
act

act that which had involved us in this dire reverse ; but I could not encounter the consequences of my act.

The state of my mind was in the utmost degree dejected and forlorn. I carried an arrow in my heart, which the kindness of my wife and children proved inadequate to extract, and the ranklings of which time itself had not the power to assuage. The wound was not mortal ; but, like the wound of Philoctetes, poisoned with the blood of the Lernean Hydra, I dragged it about with me from year to year to year, and it rendered my existence a galling burthen hardly to be supported. A great portion of my time was passed in a deep and mournful silence, which all the soothings that were addressed to me, could not prevail on me to break. Not that in this silence there was the least particle of ill-humour or sullenness. It was a mild and passive situation of the mind ; affectionate, as far as it was any thing, to the persons around me ; but it was a species of disability ; my soul had not force enough to give motion to the organs of speech, or scarcely to raise a finger. My eye only, and that only for a moment at a time, pleaded for forbearance and pardon. I seemed like a man in that species of distemper, in which the patient suffers a wasting of the bones, and at length presents to us the shadow, without the powers of a human body.

This was at some times my condition. But my stupour would at others suddenly subside.—Mechanically, and in a moment, as it were, I shook off my supineness, and sought the mountains. The wildness of an untamed and savage scene best accorded with the temper of my mind. I sprung from cliff to cliff among the points of the rocks. I rushed down precipices that to my sobered sense appeared in a manner perpendicular, and only preserved my life, with a sort of inborn and unselective care, by catching at the roots and shrubs which occasionally broke the steepness of the descent. I hung

over

the tops of rocks still more fearful in their declivities, and courted the giddiness and whirl of spirit which such spectacles are accustomed to produce. I could not resolve to die; death had too many charms to suit the self-condemnation that pursued me. I found a horrible satisfaction in determining to live and to avenge upon myself the guilt I had incurred. I was far from imagining that the evils I had yet suffered, were a mere sport and ostentation of misery, compared with those that were in reserve for me.

The state of my mind I am here describing, was not madness, nor such as could be mistaken for madness. I never forgot myself, and what I was. I was never in that delirium of thought, in which the patient is restless and active without knowing what it is that he does, and from which, when roused, he suddenly starts, shakes off the dream that engaged him, and stands astonished at himself. Mine was a rage, guided and methodised by the discipline of despair. I burst into no fits of raving; I attempted no injury to any one. Marguerite therefore could not reconcile herself to the placing me under any restraint. I frequently returned home, with my clothes smeared with the soil, and torn by the briars. But my family soon became accustomed to my returning in personal safety; and therefore, whatever was the uneasiness my wife felt for my excursions, she preferred the enduring it, to the idea of imposing on me any species of violence.

The state of my family presented a singular contrast with that of its head. Marguerite was certainly not insensible to the opposition between her former and her present mode of life—but she submitted to the change with such an unaffected cheerfulness and composure as might have extorted admiration from malignity itself.—She would perhaps have dismissed from her thoughts all retrospect to our former grandeur, had not the dejection and

and despair that seemed to have taken possession of my mind, forcibly and continually recalled it to her memory. For my sufferings I am well assured she felt the truest sympathy; but there was one consideration attending them that imperiously compelled her to task her fortitude. They deprived me of the ability of in any degree providing for and superintending my family; it became therefore incumbent upon her to exert herself for the welfare of all. Had we never fallen under this astonishing reverse, I might have spent my whole life in daily intercourse with this admirable woman, without becoming acquainted with half the treasures of her mind. She was my steward—and from the result of her own reflections made the most judicious disposition of my property. She was my physician—not by administering medicines to my body, but by carefully studying and exerting herself to remove the distemper of my mind. Unfortunately no distempers are so obstinate as mental ones—yet, had my distemper had any lighter source than an upbraiding conscience, I am persuaded the wisdom of Marguerite would have banished it. She was the instructor of my children—her daughters felt no want of a governess; and I am even ready to doubt whether the lessons of his mother did not amply supply to Charles his loss of an education in the university of Paris. The love of order, the activity, the industry, the cheerfulness of, let me say, this illustrious matron, became contagious to all the inhabitants of my roof. Once and again have I stolen a glance at them, or viewed them from a distance busied, sometimes gravely, sometimes gaily, in the plain and have whispered to my bursting heart, how miserable am I! how happy they! So insurmountable is the barrier that divides innocence from guilt! They may breathe the same air; they may dwell under the same roof; they may be of one family and one blood; they may associate with each other every day and every hour

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but they can never assimilate, never have any genuine contact. Is there a happier family than mine in all the vallies of this far-famed republic? Is there a family more virtuous, or more cultivated with all the refinements that conduce to the true dignity of man? I, I only am its burthen, and its stain! The pleasure with which I am surrounded on every side, finds a repellent quality in my heart that will not suffer its approach. To whatever is connected with me I communicate misfortune. Whenever I make my appearance, those countenances that at all other times spoke contentment and hilarity, fall into sadness. Like a pestilential wind, I appear to breathe blast to the fruits of nature, and sickness to its aspect.

Marguerite expostulated with me in the most soothing manner upon the obstinacy of my malady. My reginald! my love! said she, cease to be unhappy, or to reproach yourself! You were rash in the experiment you made upon the resources of your family. But have you done us mischief, or have you conferred a benefit? I more than half incline to the latter opinion. Let us at length dismiss artificial tastes, and idle and visionary pursuits, that do not flow in a direct line from any of the genuine principles of our nature! Here we are surrounded with sources of happiness. Here we may live in true patriarchal simplicity. What is chivalry, what are military prowess and glory? Believe me, they are the passions of a mind depraved, that with ambitious refinement seeks to be wise beyond the dictates of sentiment or reason! There is no happiness so solid, or so perfect, as that which disdains these refinements. You, like me, are fond of the luxuriant and romantic scenes of nature. Here we are placed in the midst of them. How idle it would be, to wish to change our arbors, our verdant lanes and thickets, for vaulted roofs, and gloomy halls, and massy plate? Alas, Reginald! it is I fear too true, that ~~the splendour~~ in which we lately lived, has its basis in
oppression

oppression ; and that the superfluities of the rich, are a boon extorted from the hunger and misery of the poor ! Here we see a peasantry more peaceful and less oppressed, than perhaps any other tract of the earth can exhibit. They are erect and independent, at once friendly and fearless. Is not this a refreshing spectacle ? I now begin practically to perceive that the cultivators of the fields and the vineyards, are my brethren and my sisters ; and my heart bounds with joy, as I feel my relations to society multiply. How cumbrous is magnificence ? The moderate man is the only free. He who reduces all beneath him to a state of servitude, becomes himself the slave of his establishment, and of all his domestics. To diminish the cases in which the assistance of others is felt absolutely necessary, is the only genuine road to independence. We can now move wherever we please without waiting the leisure of others. Our simple repasts require no tedious preparation, and do not imprison us in alcoves and eating rooms. Yet we partake of them with more genuine appetite, and rise from them more truly refreshed, than from the most sumptuous feast. I prepare my meal by industry and exercise—and when it is over, amuse myself with my children in the fields and the shade. Though I love the sight of the peasants, I would not be a peasant. I would have a larger stock of ideas, and a wider field of activity. I love the sight of peasants only for their accessories or by comparison.—They are comparatively more secure than any other large masses of men, and the scenes in the midst of which they are placed are delightful to sense. But I would not sacrifice in prone oblivion the best characteristics of my nature. I put in my claim for refinements and luxuries—but they are the refinements and purifying of intellect, and the luxuries of uncostly, simple taste. I would incite the whole world, if I knew how to do it, to put in a similar claim. I would improve my mind—

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would enlarge my understanding; I would contribute to the instruction of all connected with me, and to the mass of human knowledge. The pleasures I would pursue and disseminate, though not dependent on a large property, are such as could not be understood by the rustic and the savage. Our son, bred in these fields indeed, will probably never become a *PREUX CHEVALIER*, or figure in the roll of military heroes. But he may become something happier and better. He may improve his mind, and cultivate his taste. He may be the counsellor and protector of his sisters. He may be the ornament of the district in which he resides. He may institute in his adoptive country new defences for liberty, new systems of public benefit, and new improvements of life. There is no character more admirable than the patriot-yeoman, who unites with the utmost simplicity of garb and manners, an understanding fraught with information and sentiment, and a heart burning with the love of mankind. Such were Fabricius and Regulus among the antients, and such was Tell, the founder of the Helvetic liberty. For my part, I am inclined to be thankful, that this unexpected reverse in our circumstances, has made me acquainted with new pleasures, and opened to my mind an invaluable lesson. If you could but be prevailed on to enter into our pleasures, to dismiss idle reproaches and pernicious propensities, our happiness would then be complete.

The expostulations of Marguerite often excited my attention, often my respect, and sometimes produced a sort of imperfect conviction. But the conviction was transient, and the feelings I have already described as properly my own, returned, when the fresh and vivid impression of what I had heard was gone. It was in vain that I heard the praises of simplicity and innocence. I was well pleased to see those who were nearest to me, ~~not affecting~~ contentment, but really contented with these

these things. But I could not be contented for them. The lessons of my education had left too deep an impression. I could myself have surrendered my claim to admiration and homage, as a penance for my misdeeds; but I could not figure to myself a genuine satisfaction unaccompanied by these accessories; and this satisfaction I obstinately and impatiently coveted for those I loved.

CHAP. VIII.

WHILE I murmured in bitterness of soul at the lowliness to which my family was reduced, a still heavier calamity impended, as if in vengeance against the fantastic refinements of distress over which I brooded.

I was wandering, as I have often done, with a gloomy and rebellious spirit, among the rocks, a few miles distant from the place of our habitation. It was the middle of summer. The weather had been remarkably fine; but I disdained to allow the gratifications which arise from a pure atmosphere and a serene sky, to find entrance in my soul. My excursions had for some days been incessant; and the sun, which matured the corn and blackened the grapes around, had imbrowned my visage, and boiled in my blood. I drank in fierceness and desperation from the fervour of his beams. One night, as in sullen mood I watched his setting from a point of the rock, I perceived the clearness of the day subsiding in a threatening evening. The clouds gathered in the west, and, as night approached, were overspread with a deep dye of the fiercest crimson. The wind rose, and, during the hours of darkness, its roarings were hollow and tempestuous.

In the morning the clouds were hurried rapidly along, and the air was changed from a long series of sultriness

to a nipping cold. This change of the atmosphere I disregarded, and pursued my rambles. A little before noon however, the air suddenly grew so dark, as to produce a sensation perfectly tremendous. I felt as if the darkest night had never succeeded it. The impetuous motion to which I had been impelled, partly by the fever in my blood, and partly by the turbulence of the season, was suspended. Mechanically I looked round me for shelter. But I could ill distinguish the objects that were near me, when a flash of lightning, blue and sulphureous, came directly in my face, with a brightness that threatened to extinguish the organ of vision. The thunder that followed was of a length and loudness to admit of no comparison from any object with which I am acquainted. The bursts were so frequent as almost to confound themselves with each other. At present I thought only of myself; and the recent habits of my mind were not calculated to make me peculiarly accessible to fear. I stood awe-struck; but rather with the awe that inheres to a cultivated imagination, than that which consists in apprehension. I seemed ready to mount amidst the clouds, and penetrate the veil with which nature conceals her operations. I would have plunged into the recesses in which the storm was engendered, and bared my bosom to the streaming fire. Meanwhile my thoughts were solemnised and fixed by observing the diversified dance of the lightnings upon the points of the rocks, contrasting as they did in the strongest manner with the darkness in which the rest of the scene was enveloped. This added contention of the elements, did not however suspend the raging of the wind. Presently a storm of mingled hail and rain poured from the clouds, and was driven with inconceivable impetuosity. The hail-stones were of so astonishing a magnitude, that, before I was aware, I was *beaten* by them to the ground. Not daring to attempt *to rise again*, I simply endeavoured to place myself in
such

such a manner as might best protect me from their violence. I therefore remained prostrate, listening to the force with which they struck upon the earth, and feeling the rebound of their blows from different parts of my body.

In about twenty minutes the shower abated, and in half an hour was entirely over. When I began to move, I was surprised at the sensation of soreness which I felt in every part of me. I raised myself upon my elbow, and saw the hail-stones in some places lying in heaps like hillocks of ice, while in others they had ploughed up the surface, and buried themselves in the earth. As I looked further, I perceived immense trees torn from their roots, and thrown to a great distance upon the declivity. To the noise which they made in their descent, which must have been astonishingly great, I had been at the time insensible. Such were the marks which the tempest had left upon the mountains. In the plain it was still worse. I could perceive the soil for long spaces together converted into a morass, the standing corn beaten down and buried in the mud, the vines torn into a thousand pieces, the fruit-trees demolished, and even in some places the animals themselves, lambs, sheep and cows, strewing the fields with their mangled carcasses. The whole hopes of the year over which my eyes had glanced a few minutes before, for it was near the period of harvest, were converted into the most barren and dreary scene that any quarter of the globe ever witnessed. I was mounted upon a considerable eminence, and had an extensive prospect of this horrible devastation.

As I stood gazing in mute astonishment, suddenly a fear came over me that struck dampness to my very heart. What was the situation of my own family and their little remaining property, amidst this dreadful ruin? I was in a position, where, though I nearly faced our habitation, a point of the rock intercepted it from my sight.

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The obstacle was but a small one, yet it would require a considerable circuit to overcome. I flew along the path, with a speed that scarcely permitted me to breathe. When I had passed the upper rock, the whole extensive scene opened upon me in an instant. What were my sensations, when I perceived that the devastation had been even more complete here, than on the side where I first viewed it! My own cottage in particular, which that very morning had contained, and I hoped continued to contain, all that was most dear to my heart, seemed to stand an emire solitude in the midst of an immense swamp.

Marguerite, whose idea, upon our retreat into Switzerland, had been that of conforming without reserve to the new situation that was allotted us, had immediately expended the whole of what remained from the shipwreck of our fortune, in the purchase of the cottage in which we dwelt, and a small portion of land around it, sufficient with economy for the support of our family. Under her direction the hills had been covered with vines, and the fields with corn. She had purchased cows to furnish us with milk, and sheep with their fleeces, and had formed her establishment upon the model of the Swiss peasantry in our neighbourhood. Reverting to the simplicity of nature appeared to her like building upon an immovable basis, which the clash of nations could not destroy, and which was too humble to fear the treachery of courts, or the caprice of artificial refinement.

It was all swept away in a moment. Our little property looked as if it had been particularly a mark for the vengeance of heaven, and was more utterly destroyed than any of the surrounding scenes. There was not a tree left standing; there was not a hedge or a limit that remained within or around it; chaos had here resumed his empire, and avenged himself of the extraordinary order and beauty it had lately displayed.

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I was not overwhelmed with this astonishing spectacle. At that moment nature found her way to my heart, and made a man of me. I made light of these petty accessories of our existence; and the thought of my wife and my children, simply as they were in themselves, filled every avenue of my heart. For them, and them alone, I was interested: it was a question for their lives. To conceive of what they might personally have sustained, was a horror that seemed to freeze up all the arteries of my heart. I descended from the mountain. It was with the greatest difficulty, and not without many circuitous deviations that I proceeded, so much was the surface changed, and so deep and miry the swamps. My terror increased, as I passed near to the carcasses of the animals who had fallen victims to this convulsion of the elements. I observed with inconceivable alarm that the dead or wounded bodies of some human beings, were intermingled with the brute destruction. I staid not to enquire whether they were yet in a state to require assistance; the idea that had taken possession of me, left no room for the sentiment of general humanity.

A little further on I distinctly remarked the body of a woman at some distance from any habitation, who appeared to be dead, destroyed by the storm. Near her lay a female infant, apparently about six years of age. My attention was involuntarily arrested; I thought of Louisa, that sweet and amiable child, so like her admirable mother. The figure was hers; the colour of the robe corresponded to that in which I last saw her. The child was lying on her face. With all the impatient emotions of a father, I stooped down. I turned over the body, that I might identify my child. It was still warm; life had scarcely deserted it. I gazed upon the visage; it was distorted with the agonies of death; but enough to convince me still remained discernable; it was not Louisa!

I can

I can scarcely recollect a period through all the strange vicissitudes of my existence to be compared with this. If I had not felt what I then felt, I could never have conceived it. Human nature is so constituted, that the highest degree of anguish, an anguish in which the heart stretches itself to take in the mightiness of its woe, can be felt but for a few instants. When the calamity we feared is already arrived, or when the expectation of it is so certain as to shut out hope, there seems to be a principle within us by which we look with misanthropic composure on the state to which we are reduced, and the heart sullenly contracts and accommodates itself to what it most abhorred. Our hopes wither—and our pride, our self-complacence, all that taught us to rejoice in existence, wither along with them. But, when hope yet struggles with despair, or when the calamity abruptly announces itself, then is the true contention, the tempest and uproar of the soul too vast to be endured.

This sentiment of ineffable wretchedness I experienced when I stooped down over the body of the imaginary Louisa, and when I hastened to obtain the certainty which was of all things most terrible to me. The termination of such a moment of horror, is scarcely less memorable than its intrinsic greatness. In an instant the soul recovers its balance, and the thought is as if it had never been. I clapped my hands in an extasy at once of joy and astonishment, so sure did I seem to have made myself of my misfortune; I quitted the body with an unburthened heart; I flew towards my home, that I might ascertain whether I was prematurely speaking comfort to my spirit.

At length I reached it. I saw the happy groupe assembled at the door. Marguerite had entertained the same terrors for me, with which I had myself so lately been impressed. We flew into each other's arms. She *kissed her face* in my neck, and sobbed audibly. I embraced each

each of the children in turn, but Louisa with the most heart-felt delight. Are you safe, papa? Are you safe, my child? were echoed on every side. A spectator, unacquainted with what was passing in our hearts, would certainly have stood astonished to see the transport with which we exulted, surrounded as we were with desolation and ruin.

After an interval however we opened our eyes, and began to ruminate upon the new condition in which we were placed. Marguerite and myself watched each others countenances with anxiety to discover what were likely to be the feelings of either in this terrible crisis.—Be of good heart, my love! said Marguerite. Do not suffer the accident which has happened, entirely to overcome you! There was a mixed compassion, tenderness and anxiety in the tone of voice with which she uttered these words, that was inexpressibly delightful.

No, Marguerite, replied I, with enthusiastic impetuosity, I am not cast down—I never shall be cast down again! Ruin is nothing to me, so long as I am surrounded with you and our dear children. I have for some time been a fool. In the midst of every real blessing, I have fashioned for myself imaginary evils. But my eyes are now opened. How easily is the human mind induced to forget those benefits, with which we are constantly surrounded, and our possession of which we regard as secure! The feelings of this morning have awakened me. I am now cured of my folly. I have learned to value my domestic blessings as I ought. Having preserved them, I esteem myself to have lost nothing. What are gold and jewels and precious utensils? Mere dross and dirt! The human face and the human heart, reciprocations of kindness and love, and all the nameless sympathies of our nature, these are the only objects worth being attached to. What are rank and station, the homage of the multitude and the applause of fools? Let me judge

for myself! The value of a man is in his intrinsic qualities, in that of which power cannot strip him, and which adverse fortune cannot take away. That for which he is indebted to circumstances, is mere trapping and tinsel. I should love these precious and ingenuous creatures before me better, though in rags, than the children of kings in all the pomp of ornament. I am proud to be their father. Whatever may be my personal faults, the world is my debtor for having been the occasion of their existence. But they are endeared to me by a better principle than pride. I love them for their qualities. He that loves, and is loved by, a race of pure and virtuous creatures, and that lives continually in the midst of them, is an idiot, if he does not think himself happy. Surrounded as I am now surrounded, I feel as irremovable as the pillars of creation. Nothing that does not strike at their existence, can affect me with terror.

Marguerite viewed me with surprise and joy. Now indeed, said she, you are the man I took you for, and the man I shall henceforth be prouder than ever to call my husband. The sorrow in which you lately indulged, was a luxury—and we must have done with luxuries.—You will be our protector and our support.

Thus saying she took me by the hand, and mentioned me to view with her the devastation that had been committed. There was one path I had discovered, in which we might proceed some way with tolerable ease. The scene was terrible. We were indeed beggars. A whole province had been destroyed. All the corn and the fruits of the earth—most of the trees—in many places cattle—in some places men. Persons who had been rich in the morning, saw all the produce of their fields annihilated, and were unable even to guess by what process fertility was to be re-established. The comparatively wealthy scarcely knew how they were to obtain immediate subsistence—the humbler class, who always live by the expedients

f the day, saw nothing before them but the prospect perishing with hunger. We witnessed in one instance the anguish of their despair. The prospect was scarcely in any respect better than yet we felt differently. We were more impressed with the joy of our personal escape. As my error respecting the value of externals had been uncommonly great, the sudden revolution of opinion I experienced was memorable. The survey indeed that we took of our real distress somewhat saddened our hearts—but the loss it gave, was that of sobriety, not of dejection. It was incumbent upon us to make a strict examination of the amount of our property, and our immediate wants; and in this office I united myself with Marguerite, not only with a degree of cheerfulness, and applying the perfect contrast of my whole conduct ever since my arrival in Switzerland, but which greatly exceeded any I had ever before exhibited in a business of this kind. We found that, though all our hopes of a harvest were annihilated, yet we were not destitute of the instant means of subsistence. The resources we possessed, in money or provisions, that were our dependence during the period when the new produce should supply their place, were uninjured. Our implements of husbandry remained as before. The land was not impoverished, but had rather derived additional fertility from the effects of the storm. What we had lost was chiefly the principal of our capital for one year, together with a part of the capital itself in the live stock that had been destroyed. This was a loss which a certain degree of care in our external circumstances might easily have been able to supply. But the principle of supply was gone. It was with considerable difficulty that all the industry of Marguerite had enabled her to support her establishment, while every thing of this kind was going on prosperously. Such a shock as the present

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we were totally disqualified to surmount. It compelled us to a complete revolution of our affairs.

Many indeed of our neighbours had scarcely any greater advantage in their private affairs than ourselves. But they possessed one superiority that proved of the greatest importance in this conjuncture; they were natives of the state in which they resided. In the cantons of Switzerland, the destruction of the fruits of the earth, occasioned by inclement seasons and tempests, is by no means unfrequent; and it is therefore customary in plentiful years, to lay up corn in public magazines, that the people may not perish in periods of scarcity. These magazines are placed under the inspection and disposal of the magistracy; and the inhabitants looked to them with confidence for the supply of their need. No storm however had occurred in the memory of man so terrible and ruinous as the present; and it became evident that the magazines would prove a resource too feeble for the extent of the emergency.

The storm had spread itself over a space of many leagues in circumference, not only in the canton of Soleure, but in the neighbouring cantons, particularly that of Berne. The sufferers in our own canton only, amounted to scarcely less than ten thousand. While the women and children for the most part remained at home, the houses having in general suffered little other damage than the destruction of their windows, the fathers of families repaired to the seat of government to put in their claims for national relief; and these alone formed an immense troop, that threatened little less than to besiege the public magazines and the magistrates. An accurate investigation was entered into of the losses of each, it being the purpose of government, as far as its power extended, not only to supply the people with the means of immediate subsistence, but also by the disbursements *from the public treasury*, to recruit the stock of cattle,
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and to assist every one to return, with revived hopes and expectation, to the sphere of his industry. The purpose was no doubt benevolent; but in the mean time the unhappy victims found in uncertainty and expectation a real and corroding anguish.

I advanced my claim with the rest, but met with a peremptory refusal. The harsh and rigorous answer I received, was, that they had not enough for their own people, and could spare none to strangers. Upon this occasion I was compelled to feel what it was to be an alien, and how different the condition in which I was now placed, from that I had filled in my native country. There I had lived in the midst of a people, to whom the veneration of my ancestry and name seemed a part of their nature. They had witnessed for several years the respectable manner in which I lived; the virtues of Marguerite were familiar to them; and they took an interest in every thing that concerned us, a sentiment that consoled us at once for kindreds and patrons. It was the turn of mind only which is generated by rank, that had compelled us to quit their vicinity; we might have continued in it, if not in affluence, at least enjoying the gratifications that arise from general affection and respect. But here we were beheld with an eye of jealousy and distaste. We had no prejudice of birth and habit in our favour; indeed, in the reverse of fortune which had brought us hither, Marguerite had been less desirous of obtruding than withdrawing from the public eye, the circumstances of our rank. We were too recent inmates to have secured by any thing of a personal nature an advantageous opinion among our neighbours. They saw only a miserable and distracted father of a family, and a mother who, in spite of the simplicity she cultivated, sufficiently evinced that she had been accustomed to a more elevated situation. The prepossessions of mankind are clearly unfavourable to a new-comer, an emigrant who has
quitted

quitted his former connections and the scenes of his youth. They are unavoidably impelled to believe, that his taking up his abode in another country, must be owing to a weak and discreditable caprice, if it be not owing to something still more disadvantageous to his character.

The calamity therefore which we had suffered in common with most of the inhabitants of the province, finally reduced us to the necessity of a second emigration. The jealousy with which we were regarded, daily became more visible and threatening. Though, in consequence of the distribution made by order of the state, the price of commodities was not so much increased as might have been expected, we were considered as interlopers upon the portion of the natives; the sellers could with difficulty be persuaded to accommodate us, and the bystanders treated us with murmurs and reviling. While we were deliberating what course to pursue in this emergency, certain officers of government one morning entered our habitation, producing an order of the senate for our immediate removal out of the territory. It is of the essence of coercive regulations, to expel, to imprison and turn out of prison, the individuals it is thought proper to controul, without any care as to the mischiefs they may suffer, and whether they perish under or survive the evil inflicted on them. We were accordingly allowed only from six in the morning till noon, to prepare for our departure. Our guards indeed offered to permit me to remain three days to wind up my affairs, upon condition that my wife and children were instantly removed into another country, as a sort of hostages for my own departure. This indulgence however would have been useless. In the present state of the country no purchaser could be found for the little estate I possessed, and, if there could, it must doubtless have been disposed of to great disadvantage at such an emergency. I know not how we should have extricated

cated ourselves out of these difficulties, if a member of the senate, who, being one of my nearest neighbours had been struck with admiration of the virtues of Marguerite, and with compassion for my family, had not paid me a visit shortly after the arrival of the officers, and generously offered to take upon himself the care of my property, and to advance me what money might be necessary for my emigration. This offer, which at any other time might have been regarded purely a matter of course, under the present circumstances, when capital was so necessary for the revival of agriculture in the desolated country, implied a liberal and disinterested spirit. I accepted the kindness of my neighbour in both its parts, but for the reimbursement of his loan referred him to the French minister to the United Cantons, who, under all the circumstances of the case, and taking my estate as security for the money advanced, I thought it reasonable to believe would attend to my application.

CHAP. IX.

MY affairs being thus far adjusted, I took leave of my late habitation, and set off with my wife and children the same afternoon. In the evening we arrived at Basle, where we were permitted to remain that night, and the next morning were conducted in form out at the north gate of the city, where our attendants quitted us, with a fresh prohibition under the severest penalties, if we were found within the ensuing twelve months in any of the territories of the Helvetic republic.

Marguerite and myself had already formed our plan. We began with dismissing both our servants. An attendant was no longer necessary to me, nor a nurse for the infant. The suggestion of this measure originated in myself. My temper at this time, as I have already said, underwent

underwent a striking change. I was resolved to be happy—I was resolved to be active. It was hard to part with persons so long familiar to us, and who appeared rather in the character of humble friends, than domestics—but an imperious necessity demanded it. Let us, said I to Marguerite, increase and secure our happiness by diminishing our wants. I will be your husbandman and your labourer—you may depend upon my perseverance. My education has fitted me to endure hardship and fatigue, though the hardships then thought of were of a different nature. You have ever delighted in active usefulness; and will not, I know, repine at this accumulation of employment. Let us accommodate ourselves to our circumstances. Our children, I perceive, are fated to be peasants, and will therefore be eminently benefited by the example of patience and independence we shall set before them.

The next object of our plan related to the choice of our future place of residence. This originated with Marguerite. She had heard much of the beauty and richness of the country bordering on the lake of Constance, and she thought that, while we denied ourselves expensive pleasures, or rather while they were placed out of our reach, there would be a propriety in our procuring for ourselves a stock of those pleasures which would cost us nothing. This was a refinement beyond me, and serves to evince the superiority which Marguerite's virtue and force of mind still retained over mine. The virtue I had so recently adopted was a strenuous effort. I rather resolved to be happy, than could strictly be said to be happy. I loved my children indeed with an unfeigned affection. It was with sincerity that I professed to prefer them to all earthly possessions. But vanity and ostentation were habits wrought into my soul, and might be said to form part of its essence. I could *not, but by the force of constant recollection, keep them*

out of my wishes and hopes for the future. I could not, like Marguerite, suffer my thoughts, as it were, to riot and wanton in the pleasures of poverty. I could only reconcile myself to my fate by a sort of gloomy firmness. The tranquility I seemed to have attained, was an unnatural state of my soul, to which it was necessary that I should resolutely hold myself down, and from which my thoughts appeared ever upon the alert to escape. Bitter experience had at length taught me a hard lesson, and that lesson I was determined to practise, whatever pangs my resignation might cost me.

We proceeded without hesitation in the direction we had resolved to pursue. Our whole journey exceeded the space of forty leagues in extent, and the expense necessarily attendant upon it, (our family, even after its reduction, consisting of no less than six persons) drained our purse of a great part of the money which had been supplied to us by the benevolent senator. But he had agreed to undertake the disposing of the property we were obliged to leave behind us, and in the mean time, if any considerable interval occurred before that was accomplished, to furnish us with the sums that should be necessary for our subsistence. We placed the utmost reliance upon his fidelity, and dismissed from our minds all anxiety respecting the interval which our banishment had interposed between us and the resources necessary for our future settlement.

Upon our arrival at Constance, we found a letter from our friend; and, though he transmitted to us no fresh supply, the complexion of his communication was upon the whole so encouraging, as to determine us, with no other delay than that of four days rest from our journey, to pass to the other side of the lake, and explore for ourselves a situation suitable to our design. The western bank of the lake, with the exception only of the city of Constance, was part of the **PAYS CONQUIS** of the United

Cantons; the eastern bank was a territory dependent on the government of that city. It was in this territory that we purposed fixing our residence; and we trusted that our affairs would shortly be put in a train to enable us to take possession of the spot we should select.

Thus driven once more into flight by the pressure of misfortune, and compelled to exchange for a land unknown the scenes which familiarity might have endeared, or tender recollections have made interesting, we did not sink under the weight of our adversity. This removal was not like our last. Switzerland was to none of us endeared like the vales of St. Leon. I was not now goaded and tormented by conscious guilt in the degree I had then been; Marguerite was not afflicted by the spectacle of my misery. Our present change, though it might be denominated a fall, was light in comparison with the former. The composure I had gained was new to me, and had to my own mind all the gloss of novelty. To my companions it proved contagious; they were astonished at my serenity, and drew from it an unwonted lightness of heart.

Thus circumstanced, our tour had its charms for us all, and there are few passages of my life that I have felt more agreeably. The lake itself is uncommonly beautiful, and its environs are fertile and interesting. It is surrounded with an abundance of towns, villages, country-seats and monasteries, sufficient to adorn and diversify the view, but not to exclude the sweetness of a rural scenery, or the grand features of nature. We coasted a considerable part of the lake, that we might judge in some degree, previously to our landing, which part of the shore promised best to yield us the object we sought. The autumn was now commencing; the air was liquid and sweet; the foliage was rich and varied; and the vine-covered hills exhibited a warmth and luxuriance of colouring, that no other object of nature or art

is able to cope with. Surrounded with these objects, I sat in my boat in the midst of my children; and, as I was but just awakened to an observation of their worth and my own happiness, I viewed them with a transport that would be ill illustrated by being compared with the transport of a miser over his new-recovered treasure from the bowels of the deep.

Oh, poverty! exclaimed I, with elevated and unconquerable emotion, if these are the delights that attend thee, willingly will I resign the pomp of palaces and the splendour of rank to whoever shall deem them worth his acceptance! Henceforth I desire only to dedicate myself to the simplicity of nature and the genuine sentiments of the heart. I will enjoy the beauty of scenes cultivated by other hands than mine, or that are spread out before me by the author of the universe. I will sit in the midst of my children, and revel in the luxury of domestic affections; pleasures these, that may be incumbered, but cannot be heightened, by all that wealth has in its power to bestow! Wealth serves no other purpose than to deprave the soul, and adulterate the fountains of genuine delight.

Such was the spirit of exultation with which my mind was at this time filled. I am sensible that it was only calculated to be transitory. I might learn to be contented; I was not formed to be satisfied in obscurity and a low estate.

Thus happy and thus amused, we spent two days in coasting the lake, landing frequently for the purposes either of variety or enquiry, and regularly passing the night on shore. On the evening of the second day, we were struck with the neat appearance and pleasing situation of a cottage, which we discovered in our rambles, about a mile and a half from the lake. We found that it was to be sold, and it seemed precisely to correspond with the wishes we had formed. It was at a considerable distance
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from any populous neighbourhood, the nearest town being that of Merspurgh, the usual residence of the bishops of Constance, which was distant from this spot not less than three leagues. The cottage was situated in a valley, the hills being for the most part crowned with rich and verdant foliage, their sides covered with vineyards and corn, and a clear, transparent rivulet murmuring along from east to west. In the distance a few similar cottages discovered themselves, and in front there was an opening between the hills, just wide enough to show us a few sails as they floated along the now even surface of the lake. We approached the cottage, and found in it only one person, an interesting girl of nineteen, who had resided there from her birth, and had been employed for the last four years in attendance upon the closing scene of her mother. Her mother had been dead only a few weeks, and she was upon the point of removing, as she told us, to the house of a brother, the best creature in the world, who was already married, and had a family of children. While we were talking with her, we perceived a fine boy of about eleven years of age skipping along the meadow. He proved to be her nephew, and hastened to say that his father and Mr. Henry were just behind, and would be with her in a few minutes. We waited their arrival, and it was easy to see that Mr. Henry was by no means an indifferent object in the eyes of the beautiful orphan: she had probably conditioned that he should permit her to remain single, as long as she could be of any use to her mother. The lovers were well satisfied that the girl's brother should be taken aside, that I might talk over with him the affair of the cottage. We made a tour of the fields that were part of the property of the deceased, and the terms of our intended purchase were easily adjusted.

Though we had now accomplished the immediate purpose of our expedition, yet, as we had found unusual
exhilaration

exhilaration and sweetness in the objects it presented to us, we came to a resolution of continuing it still further, and completing the circuit of the lake. We were aware that it would be vain as yet to expect to receive the money requisite for completing our purchase ; and, as no pleasure, merely in the way of relaxation, could be more delightful than that we were now enjoying, so was it impossible that we could fill up our time in a more frugal manner than in this little voyage. Our gratification was not less, but more perfect, because it consisted of simple, inartificial, unbought amusements. The scenes around us were refreshing and invigorating ; they were calculated, temporarily at least, to inspire gaiety and youth into decrepitude itself. Amidst these scenes we forgot our sorrows ; they were a kind of stream, in which weariness and dejection plunged their limbs, and came forth untired and alert. They awakened in the mind all its most pleasing associations. Having already, as we believed, chosen the place of our future residence, we busied ourselves in imagining all the accompaniments that would grow out of it. We determined that poverty with health would not fail to be attended with its portion of pleasures. The scenes of nature were all our own ; nor could wealth give them a more perfect, or a firmer appropriation. The affections and charities of habitude and consanguinity we trusted we should feel uninterrupted ; unincumbered with the ceremonies and trappings of life, and in that rural plainness which is their genial soil.

After a leisurely and delightful voyage of six days, we returned to Constance. We expected to have found on our return some further intelligence from the beneficent senator, but in this we were disappointed. The imagination however easily suggested to us a variety of circumstances that might have delayed the business he had undertaken ; and it was no forced inference to suppose that he deferred writing, because he had nothing
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important to communicate. At first therefore we suffered little uneasiness from the delay ; but, as time proceeded, and the silence of our protector continued, the affair began to assume a more serious aspect. The little stock we had brought with us in our exile, was in a rapid progress of decay. We had managed it with frugality, though not at first with that anxious solicitude, the necessity of which we now began to apprehend. We had procured for ourselves two small and inconvenient apartments in an obscure alley of the city of Constance. We were in the act of meditating what steps it would be necessary to take in this unfortunate emergency, when intelligence was brought us of the sudden decease of the person upon whose kindness and exertions we depended.

He was succeeded in his estate by his nephew, a man of whom we had heard something during our residence in the neighbourhood, and whose habits we understood to be diametrically the reverse of his predecessor's. In short, he had been represented to us as illiberal, morose, selfish and litigious, a man who, having suffered in one part of his life the hardships of poverty, scrupled no means, honourable or otherwise, of removing it to the greatest practicable distance. He had already reaped the succession some weeks, when we heard of the event that put him in possession of it ; and the letters which I had more than once addressed to our protector, had probably fallen into his hands. These circumstances afforded no favourable augury of the treatment we might expect from him. The first thing which seemed proper was to write to him, which I accordingly did. I acquainted him with the nature of the transaction between myself and his uncle, and signified how necessary it was that we should come to a conclusion as speedily as possible. I represented to him pathetically the condition to which I was born, and the opulence in which I had passed many *years of my life*, together with the contrast afforded by the

the present reduced and urgent circumstances of my family. I entreated him to exert his generosity and justice in behalf of an unfortunate exile, whom untoward events had deprived of the power of doing justice to himself.

To this letter I received no answer. Uncertain as to the cause of my correspondent's silence, or even whether my letter had been received, I wrote again. My heart was wrung with this new adversity. I was forbidden under pain of perpetual imprisonment to return to the territories of the republic, and I had no friend to solicit in my behalf. In Constance I was utterly a stranger.—In Switzerland my unfortunate habits of life; the depression and solitude in which I had been merged, deprived me of the opportunity of forming connections. The deceased was the only person who had been disposed to interfere for me. It was too probable that the silence of his successor was an indication of the hostility of his views. I saw nothing before me but the prospect of my family perishing with want, deprived of their last resource, exiles and penniless. Thus destitute and forlorn, what could we do! to what plan could we have recourse? We had not so much as the means of providing ourselves with the implements of the humblest labour. If we had, could I, under my circumstances, resolve upon this? Could I give up the last slender pittance of my children while there was a chance of recovering it—and by surrendering them to the slavery of perpetual labour, surrender them to the lowest degree of ignorance and degradation? No—I still clung to this final hope, and was resolved to undertake any thing, however desperate, rather than part with it. Such were my feelings—and, in the new letter which I now dispatched, I poured out all the anguish of my soul.

A reply to this letter was at length vouchsafed. The heir of my protector informed me, that he knew nothing
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of the business to which I alluded ; that he had come into possession of the lands I described, together with the other property of his late uncle, and regarded himself as holding them by the same tenure ; that he found in the accounts of the estate a sum of money advanced to me, which he might with the strictest justice regard as a debt, and pursue me for it accordingly. He should be liberal enough however so far to give credit to my story, and to consider the sum in question as advanced upon a pledge of land : in that case, I might regard myself as sufficiently fortunate, in having obtained even that amount at a time when, but for the humanity or weakness of his uncle, my estate would not have sold for a farthing. Meanwhile the forbearance which he proffered, would, he observed, depend upon my conduct, and be retracted if I afforded him cause for resentment. He added, that he despised my menaces and commands, and that, if I took a single step against him, I should find it terminate in my utter ruin.

Nothing could be more profligate than the style of his letter. But its impotence was equal to its wickedness. It was absurd to threaten to inflict ruin on a man whom ruin had already overtaken. Before the letter arrived, I had disbursed the whole sum I had brought with me from Switzerland. This entire annihilation of my resources seemed to steal on me unperceived. Finding that all reply to my importunity was either refused, or deferred to an uncertain period, I would willingly at all risks have sought the villain who thus obdurately devoted me and my family to destruction, and have endeavoured to obtain justice in person. But it was now too late. Before I felt the case thus desperate, my finances were so far reduced, as to make it impracticable for me to leave my wife and children enough to support them in my absence, even if I had determined myself to set out upon *this perilous expedition penniless*. I resolved that, if

we did perish, we would perish together. Penury was now advancing upon us with such rapid strides, that the lowest and most scanty resources no longer admitted of neglect. Had a case thus desperate been encountered with timely attention, it is not improbable that some of the various talents I had acquired in the course of my education, would have furnished me with a mean of subsistence, not altogether plebeian or incompetent. But, with the uncertainty of my situation, and totally unaccustomed as I was to regard my person or mind as a machine fitted for productive labour, I had not looked to this question, till the urgency of the case deprived me of every advantage I might otherwise have seized. I was glad therefore to have recourse to menial occupation, and sought employment under the gardener of the episcopal palace, for whose service I was sufficiently qualified by my ten years retreat in the Bordelois. That I might better adapt myself to the painful necessity of my situation, I previously exchanged some of my own cloaths for garments more suitable to the business I now solicited. It was not till I had arrived within a very few days to the end of my resources, that even this expedient, by a sort of accident, recurred to my mind. Marguerite, though fully aware of the urgency of the case, had, as she afterwards told me, imposed on herself a compulsory silence, fearing for the inflamed and irritated frame of my mind, and aware that the course of events would ultimately lead me to a point, with which she dreaded to intermeddle. This was for her a trying moment—my lately recovered insanity obliging her to contemplate in silence our growing distress, and to wait the attack of hunger and want that threatened to destroy us, with an apparent tranquillity and cheerfulness.

For me, so entire a revolution had taken place in my sentiments, that I spurned with contempt, so far as related to myself, that pride of rank and romantic gallantry

of honour, which had formerly been my idols. I stood with a sort of gloomy contentment to the situation upon which my destiny drove me. I regarded it the natural result of my former misconduct; and the sentiment of ease and relief, from thus expiating, were with the sweat of my brow, the temptation which I had yielded. Had I been myself only reduced thus low, or had the produce of my labour been sent to purchase competence for my wife and the means of instruction for my family, I can safely affirm that I should have found no consequence so direct from my own gradation, as the means of silencing the reproachful conscience and reconciling me to myself. But, when I returned in the evening with the earnings of my day's labour, and found it incompetent to the procuring for those who depended on me the simplest means of subsistence, then indeed my sensations were different. My head ached within me. I did not return after the fatigues of the day, which, to me who had not been accustomed to remitted labour, and who now began to feel that I was not so young as I had been at the siege of Pavia, extremely trying, I did not return, I say, to a night's repose. I became a very woman when I looked forward and endeavoured to picture to myself the future situation of my family. I watered my pillow with my tears. Often, when I imagined that my whole family were as I gave vent to my perturbed and distracted mind in grief—Marguerite would sometimes overhear me, and, by the gentlest suggestions of her admirable mind, would endeavour to soothe my thoughts to peace. For the present, as I have said, my earnings were incompetent, we found it necessary to supply the deficiency by the sale of the few garments, not in immediate use, that we still possessed. What then would be the case when these were gone, and when, in addition to this, it was

be necessary to purchase, not only food to eat, and a roof to shelter, but also clothes to cover us?

CHAP. X.

THESE deficiencies I anxiously anticipated; but there was another evil, upon which I had not calculated, that was still nearer and more overwhelming. The mode of life in which I was now engaged, so different from any thing to which I had been accustomed, excessive fatigue, together with the occasional heat of the weather, the uneasiness of my mind and the sleeplessness of my nights, all combined to throw me into a fever, which, though it did not last long, had raged so furiously during the period of its continuance, as to leave me in a state of the most complete debility. While the disorder was upon me, I was sensible of my danger; and, as the brilliant and consolatory prospects of life seemed for ever closed upon me, I at first regarded my approaching dissolution with complacency, and longed to be released from a series of woes, in which I had been originally involved by my own folly. This frame of mind however was of no great duration; the more nearly I contemplated the idea of separation from those I loved, the smaller was my resignation. I was unwilling to quit those dear objects by which I still held to this mortal scene; I shrunk with aversion from that barrier which separates us from all that is new, mysterious and strange. Another train of ideas succeeded this, and I began to despise myself for my impatience and cowardice. It was by my vices that my family was involved in a long train of misfortunes; could I shrink from partaking what I had not feared to create? The greater were the adversities for which they were reserved, the more ought I to desire to suffer with them."

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I had already committed the evil ; in what remained, it was reasonable to suppose I should prove their benefactor and not their foe. It was incumbent on me to soothe and to animate them, to enrich their minds with cheerfulness and courage, and to set before them an example of philosophy and patience. By my faculties of industry I was their principal hope ; and, whatever we might suffer combined, it was probable their sufferings would be infinitely greater, if deprived of my assistance. These reflections gave me energy ; and it seemed as if the resolute predilection I had conceived for life, contributed much to my recovery.

One thing which strongly confirmed the change my mind underwent in this respect, was a conversation that I overheard, at a time when I was supposed to be completely in a state of insensibility, but when, though I was too much reduced to give almost any tokens of life, my faculties of hearing and understanding what passed around me, were entire. Charles came up to my bedside, laid his hand upon mine as if to feel the state of the skin, and, with a handkerchief that was near, wiped away the moisture that bedewed my face. He had been fitted for many nurse-like offices by the unwearied attention he had exerted towards me in the paroxysm of my insanity. Having finished his task he withdrew from the bed, and burst into tears. His mother came up to him, drew him to the furthest part of the room, and in a low voice began the conversation.

Do, my dear boy, go down stairs, and get yourself something to eat. You see, your papa is quiet now.

I am afraid that will not last long, and then he will be so restless, and toss about so, it is dreadful to see him.

I will watch, Charles, and let you know.

Indeed, mama, I cannot eat now. I will by and by.

You must try to eat, Charles, or else you will make yourself

yourself quite ill. If you were ill too, it would be more than I could support.

I will not be ill, mamma. I assure you I will not. But, besides that I have no stomach, I cannot bear to eat, when there is hardly enough for my sisters.

Eat, boy. Do not trouble yourself about that. We shall get more when that is gone. God is good, and will take care of us.

I know that God is good, but, for all that, one must not expect to have every thing one wishes. Though God is good, there are dreadful misfortunes in the world, and I suppose we shall have our share of them.

Come, Charles, though you are but a boy, you are the best boy in the world. You are now almost my only comfort, but you will not be able to comfort me, if you do not take care of yourself.

Dear mamma!—Do you know, mamma, I heard that naughty man below stairs count up last night how much rent you owed him for, and swear you should not stay any longer, if you did not pay him. If I were a little bigger, I would talk to him so that he should not dare to insult us in our distress. But, not being big enough, I opened the door and went into the room, and begged him for God's sake not to add to your distress. And, though he is so ugly, I took hold of his hand, and kissed it. But it felt like iron, which put me in mind of his iron heart, and I cried ready to burst with mortification. He did not say hardly a word.

He must be paid, Charles: he shall be paid.

Do you know, mamma, as soon as I left him, I went to the bishop's gardens, and spoke to the gardener. I asked him, if he had heard that my papa was ill, and he said, he had. He said too, he was very sorry, and wanted to know what hand we made of it for want of the wages. I told him, we were sadly off, and the man of the house had just been affronting me about his rent.

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But, says I, cannot you give me something to do, to weed or to rake? I can dig a little too, and scatter seed. He asked, if I knew weeds from flowers? Oh, that I do! said I. Well then, said he, there is not much you can do, but you are a good boy, and I will put you on the bishop's list. But now, mamma, I have not the heart to work, till I see whether papa will get well again.

While poor Charles told his artless tale, Marguerite wept over him, and kissed him again and again. She called him the best child in the world, and said that, if I were but so fortunate as to recover, with such a husband and such a son, she should yet be the happiest of women.

Oh, my poor father! exclaimed Charles. Ever since the great hail-storm, I have every hour loved him better than before. I thought that was impossible, but he is so gentle, so kind, so good-humoured and so patient! I loved him when he was harsh, and when he was out of his mind, but nothing so well then as I have done since. People that are kind and smile, always do one good; but nobody's smiles are like my fathers. It makes me cry with joy sometimes, when I do but think of them. Pray, pappas, added he, coming up to the bed-side, and whispering, yet with a hurried and passionate accent, get well! Do but get well, and we will be so happy! Never was there a family so happy or so loving as we will be!

While he spoke thus, I endeavoured to put out my hand, but I could not; I endeavoured to smile, but I was unable: my heart was in a feeble, yet soothing tranquility. The accents of love I had heard, dwelt upon my memory. They had talked of distress, but the sentiment of love was uppermost in my recollection. I was too weak of frame, to suffer intellectual distress; no accents but those which carried balm to my spirit, seemed capable

capable of resting upon my ear. From this hour, I regularly grew better, and, as I recovered, seemed to feel more and more vividly how enviable it was to be the head of a loving and harmonious family.

My recovery however was exceedingly slow, and it was several weeks before I had so far recruited my strength as to be capable of my ordinary occupations. In the mean time the pecuniary difficulties to which we were exposed, hourly increased; and the cheerful, but insignificant labours of Charles, could contribute little to the support of a family. The melancholy nature of our situation might perhaps have been expected to prevent the restoration of my health. At first however it had not that effect. The debilitated state of my animal functions led me, by a sort of irresistible instinct, to reject ideas and reflections which I should then have been unable to endure. I saw the anxiety and affection of my family, and I was comforted. I saw the smiles of Marguerite, and I seemed insensible to the languor, the saddened cheerfulness they expressed. I did not perceive that, while I was provided with every thing necessary in any condition, my family were in want of the very bread that should sustain existence.

My health in, the mean time improved, and my perceptions became proportionably clearer. Symptoms of desolation and famine, though as much as possible covered from my sight, obtruded themselves, and were remarked. One day in particular I observed various tokens of this nature in silence, and with that sort of bewildered understanding, which at once labours for comprehension, and resists belief. The day closed—and what I had perceived, pressed upon my mind, and excluded sleep.—now for the first time I exerted myself to recollect in a methodical way the state of my affairs—for the severity of my illness had at length succeeded to banish from me all ideas and feelings, but what related to the sensations
it

it produced and the objects around me—and it was not without effort that I could once more fully call to mind the scenes in which I had been engaged. The truth then by regular degrees rose completely to view—and I began to be astonished that my poor wife and children had been able in any manner to get through the horrible evils to which they must have been exposed. This tho't I revolved in my mind for near two hours—and, the longer I dwelt upon it, the more perturbed and restless I grew. At length it became impossible for me to hold my contemplations pent up in my own bosom. I turned to Marguerite, and asked her, whether she were asleep.

She answered in the negative : she had been remarking my restlessness, and tenderly enquiring respecting its cause.

How long, said I, is it since I was taken with the fever ?

A month to-morrow, replied she. It was of the most malignant and distressing kind, while it lasted, and I did not expect you to live. But it has left you a fortnight, and I hope, Reginald, you find yourself getting strong again.

And so we are here in Constance, and we have left Switzerland ——— ?

Three months, my love !

I remember very well the letter we received from Mons. Grimseld—has any further intelligence reached us from that quarter ?

None.

None ! No supply of any kind has reached you ?

My dear Reginald, talk of something else ! You will soon, I hope, be well ; our children are all alive—and the calamity, that has not succeeded to separate us, or to diminish our circle of love even by a single member, we will learn to bear. Let us fix our attention on the better prospects that open before us !

Stay

Stay, Marguerite ! I have other questions to ask. Before you require me to bear the calamities that have overtaken us, let me understand what these calamities are. While we waited for intelligence from Switzerland, we expended the whole sum that we brought with us, and I was obliged to hire myself to the episcopal gardener for bread ; was it not so ?

Indeed, Reginald, you are to blame ! Pray, question me no further !

This was our condition some time ago ; and now, for a month past, I have been incapable of labour. Marguerite what have you done ?

Indeed, my love, I have been too anxious for you, to think much of any thing else. We had still some things, you know, that we could contrive to do without, and those I have sold. Charles too, our excellent-hearted son, has lately hired himself to the gardener, and has every night brought us home a little, though it was but little.

Dear boy ! What children, what a wife, have I brought to destruction ! Our rent too, surely you have not been able to pay that ?

Not entirely. In part I have been obliged to pay it.

Ah, I well remember how flinty-hearted a wretch has got the power over us in that respect !

He has not turned us out of doors. He threatened hard several times. At last I saw it was necessary to make an effort, and the day before yesterday I paid him half his demand. If I could have avoided that, we might have had a supply of food a little longer. I intreated earnestly for a little further indulgence, but it was in vain. It went against the pride and independence of my soul to sue to this man, but it was for you and my children !

Remorseless wretch ! Then every petty resource we had is gone ?

Indeed I do not know that we have any thing more to sell. I searched narrowly yesterday; but I will examine again to-day. The poor children must have something to support them, and their fare has of late been dreadfully scanty.

Their fare! What have they eaten?

Bread; nothing else for the last fortnight!

And yourself?

Oh, Reginald! it was necessary, you know, that I should keep myself alive. But, I assure you, I have robbed them as little as I could!

Horror, horror! Marguerite, what is it you dream of? I see my wife and children dying of hunger, and you talk to me of hope and of prospects! Why has this detail of miseries been concealed from me! Why have I been suffered, with accursed and unnatural appetite, to feed on the vitals of all I love!

Reginald! even selfishness itself would have taught us that! It is to your recovery that we look for our future support!

Mock me not, I adjure you, with senseless words! You talk idly of the future, while the tremendous present bars all prospect to that future! We are perishing by inches! We have no provision for the coming day! No, no; something desperate, something yet unthought of, must be attempted! I will not sit inactive, and see my offspring around me die in succession. No, by heaven! Though I am starving like Ugolino, I am not, like Ugolino, shut up in a dungeon! The world is open; its scenes are wide; the resources it offers are to the bold and despairing, innumerable! I am a father, and will show myself worthy of the name!

Reginald! torture me not by language like this! Think what it is to be indeed a father, and make yourself that! Be careful of yourself; complete your recovery,—and leave the rest to me! I have conducted it
thus

thus far, nor am I yet without hope. Eight days ago I applied to the secretary of the palace, representing your case as a retainer of the bishop, disabled by sickness, and with a family unprovided for. Till yesterday I got no answer to my memorial, and then he informed me, that you had been so short a time in employ, that nothing could be done for you. But to-day I will throw myself at the feet of the bishop himself, who arrived last night only from the other side of the lake.

Every word that Marguerite uttered, went to my heart. It was not long before the dawn of day, and the truths I had heard were further confirmed to me by the organ of sight. The sentiments of this night produced a total revolution in me, and I was no longer the feeble convalescent that the setting sun of the preceding day had left me. The film was removed from my eyes, and I surveyed not the objects around me with a glassy eye and unapprehensive observation. All the powers I possessed were alert and in motion. To my suspicions and hurried gaze the apartment appeared stripped of its moveables, and left naked, a mansion in which for despair to take up his abode. My children approached me—I seemed to read the wan and emaciated traces of death in their countenances. This perhaps was in some degree the painting of my too conscious thoughts. But there needed no exaggeration to awaken torture in my bosom, when thus stimulated, I observed for the first time the dreadful change that had taken place in Marguerite. Her colour was gone—her cheeks were sunk; her eye had the quickness and discomposure expressive of debility. I took hold of her hand, and found it cold, emaciated and white. I pressed it to my lips with agony—a tear unbidden fell from my eye, and rested upon it. Having finished my examination, I took my hat, and was hastening to escape into the street. Marguerite noted my motions, and anxiously interposed to prevent my de-

sign. She laid her hand on my arm, gently, yet in a manner full of irresistible expostulation.

Where would you go? What have you purposed? Do not,—Oh, do not, destroy a family, to whom your life, your sobriety and prudence are indispensable!

I took her hand within both mine. Compose yourself, my love! I have been your enemy too much already, to be capable now, so much as in thought, of adding to my guilt! I need an interval for musing and determination. I will return in a very short time, and you shall be the confidant of my thoughts!

With wild and impatient spirit I repassed in idea the whole history of my life. But principally I dwelt in recollection upon the marquis de Damville, that generous friend, that munificent benefactor, whose confidence I had so ill repaid. Damville! exclaimed I, you trusted to me your daughter, the dearest thing you knew on earth; you believed that the wretch did not live who could be unjust to so rich a pledge. Look down, look down, oh, best of men! from the heaven to which your virtues have raised you, and see how much baseness man, yes, the man you disdained not to call your friend, is capable! But, no! a sight like this might well convert the heaven you dwell in to hell! You trusted her to me; I have robbed her! You enriched her mind with the noblest endowments; I have buried them in the mire of the vilest condition! All her generous, her unwearied exertions are fruitless; by my evil genius they are blasted! I have made her a mother, only that she might behold her children perishing with hunger! They stretch out their hands to me for the smallest portion of that inheritance, which I have squandered in more than demoniac vice! This, this is the fruit of my misdeeds! I am now draining the last dregs of that mischief, of which I have so wickedly, so basely been the author!

As

As I returned, I met Marguerite, who was come from her attempt upon the bishop. He had received her paper, and delivered it to his secretary, that very secretary who had already disappointed all her expectations from that quarter. She had attempted to speak, to adjure the bishop, whatever he did, not to deliver her over to a man by whom her hopes had been so cruelly frustrated; but the tumult of the scene drowned her voice, and the hurry and confusion overpowered her efforts. They however drew such a degree of attention on her, that, in the dissensions which religious broils at that time spread in Constance, she was suspected of pressing thus earnestly towards the person of the bishop with no good design, and in fine was rudely thrust out of the palace. She had not recovered from the agitation into which she had been thrown, when I met her. I eagerly enquired into the cause of her apparent distress; but she shook her head mournfully, and was silent. I easily understood where she had been, and the failure of her experiment.

All then, said I, is at an end. Now, Marguerite, you must give up your experiments, and leave to me the cure of evils of which I only am the author. I will return this instant to the garden of the palace, and resume the situation I formerly occupied.

For God's sake, Reginald, what is it you mean? You have just acquired strength to seek the benefit of air. The least exertion fatigues you. At this moment, the little walk you have taken has covered you with perspiration. You could not dig or stoop for a quarter of an hour without being utterly exhausted.

Marguerite I will not sit down tamely, and see my family expire. In many cases it is reasonable to bid a valetudinarian take care of himself. But our situation is beyond that. I must do something. Extraordinary circumstances often bring along with them extraordinary strength. No man knows, till the experiment, what he

is capable of effecting. I feel at this moment no debility—and I doubt not that the despair of my mind will give redoubled energy to my efforts.

While I spoke thus, I was conscious that I had little more than the strength of a new-born child. But I could not endure at such a time to remain in inactivity. I felt as much ashamed of the debilitated state in which my fever had left me, as I could have done for the most inglorious effeminacy and cowardice of soul. I was determined to relieve my family, or perish in the attempt.—If all my efforts were vain, I could not better finish my career, than exhausted, sinking, expiring under a last exertion to discharge the duties of my station.

We returned into the house. Margueritte took from a closet the last remnant of provisions we had, the purchase of poor Charles's labour of the preceding day.—There was a general contest who should escape from receiving any part in the distribution. Charles had withdrawn himself, and was not to be found. Julia endeavoured to abscond, but was stopped by Louisa and her mother. She had wept so much, that inanition seemed more dangerous for her, than perhaps for any other of the circle. No one can conceive, who has not felt it, how affecting a contest of this kind must appear to me, sensible as I was to the danger that their virtue and generous affection were the prelude only to their common destruction. I said, there was a general contest who should avoid all share in the distribution—but I recollect that the little Marguerite, two years and a half old, exclaimed at first, I am so hungry, mamma! But, watching, as she carefully did, every thing that passed, she presently laid down her bread upon the table, in silence, and almost untouched—and, being asked, why she did so? she replied in a tone of speaking sensibility, thank you, *I am not hungry now!*

This

This scene made an impression on my mind, never to be forgotten. It blasted and corrupted all the pulses of my soul. A little before, I had reconciled myself to poverty ; I had even brought myself to regard it with cheerfulness. But the sentiment was now reversed. I could endure it, I could steel myself against its attacks ; but never from this hour, in the wildest paroxysms of enthusiasm, has it been the topic of my exultation or my panegyric. No change of circumstances, no inundation of wealth, has had the power to obliterate from my recollection what I then saw. A family perishing with hunger ; all that is dearest to you in the world sinking under the most dreadful of all the scourges with which this sublunary scene is ever afflicted ; no help near ; no prospect but of still accumulating distress : a death, the slowest, yet the most certain and most agonizing, that can befall us ; no, there is nothing that has power to rend all the strings of the heart like this ! From this moment, the whole set of my feelings were changed. Avarice descended and took possession of my soul. Haunted, as I perpetually was, by images of the plague of famine, nothing appeared to me so valuable as wealth ; nothing so desirable as to be placed at the utmost possible distance from want. An appetite of this kind is insatiable ; no distance seems sufficiently great ; no obstacles, mountains on mountains of gold, appear an adequate security to bar from us the approach of the monster we dread.

While I speak of the sentiments which in the sequel were generated in my mind by what I now saw, I am suspending my narrative in a crisis at which a family, interesting, amiable and virtuous, is reduced to the lowest state of humiliation and distress.

They are moments like these, that harden the human heart, and fill us with inextinguishable hatred and contempt for our species. They tear off the trappings and decoration of polished society, and show it in all its hideousness.

deousness. The wanton eye of pampered pride pleases itself with the spectacle of cities and palaces, the stately column and the swelling arch. It observes at hand the busy scene, where all are occupied in the various pursuits of pleasure or industry, and admires the concert, the wide-spreading confederacy, by means of which each after his mode is unconsciously promoting the objects of others. Cheated by the outside of things, we denominate this a vast combination for general benefit. The poor and the famished man contemplates the scene with other thoughts. Unbribed to admire and applaud, he sees in it a confederacy of hostility and general oppression. He sees every man pursuing his selfish ends, regardless of the wants of others. He sees himself contemptuously driven from the circle, where the rest of his fellow-citizens are busily and profitably engaged. He lives in the midst of a crowd, without one friend to feel an interest in his welfare. He lives in the midst of plenty, from the participation of which he is driven by brutal menaces and violence. No man who has not been placed in his situation, can imagine the sensations, with which, overwhelmed as he is with domestic ruin and despair, he beholds the riot, the prodigality, the idiot ostentation, the senseless expense, with which he is surrounded on every side. What were we to do? Were we to beg along the streets? Were we to intreat for wretched offals at rich men's doors? Alas, this, it was to be feared, even if we stooped to the miserable attempt, instead of satisfying wants for ever new, would only prolong in the bitterness of anguish the fate for which we were reserved! —

An unexpected relief at this time presented itself. — While the scanty meal I have mentioned was yet unfinished, a letter was presented to me inclosing under its cover a bill of one hundred crowns. The letter was from *Bernardin* the faithful servant, whom we had found it

necessary

necessary to dismiss three months before, when we quitted our residence in Switzerland. It informed us that, as soon as he had parted from us, he had set out on his return to his native town, next adjacent to my paternal residence, that he found his father had died a short time before, and that, from the sale of his effects, he had reaped an inheritance, to triple the amount of the sum he had now forwarded to us. He had heard by accident of the death of our friend in Switzerland, and the character of his successor, and dreaded that the consequences might prove highly injurious to us. He had still some business to settle with the surviving branches of his family, but that would be over in a few weeks, and then if we would allow him, he would return to his dear master, and afford us every assistance in his power. The little property that had now fallen to him would prevent him from being a burthen, and he would hire a spot of land, and remain near us, if we refused him the consolation of returning to his former employment.

What a reproach was it to me, that, descended from one of the most illustrious families in Europe, the heir of an ample patrimony, and receiving a still larger fortune in marriage, I should, by the total neglect and profligate defiance of the duties incumbent on me, have reduced myself so low, as to be indebted to a peasant and a menial for the means of saving my family from instant destruction ! This was a deep and fatal wound to the pride of my soul. There was however no alternative, no possibility of rejecting the supply afforded us at so eventful a moment. We determined to use it for the present, and to repay it with the earliest opportunity — and in the following week, in spite of the remonstrances of Marguerite, the yet feeble state of my health, and the penalties annexed to the proceeding, I set off for the canton of Soleure, determined, if possible, to wrest the

little staff of my family from the hand that so basely detained it.

I passed through Zurich and a part of the canton of Basle without obstacle; these parts of Switzerland had not suffered from the calamity which had occasioned our exile. In proceeding further, I found it necessary to assume a disguise, and to avoid large towns and frequented roads. I reached at length the well-known scene in which I had so lately consumed twelve months of my life; In which I first began to breathe (to breathe, not to be refreshed) from ruin, beggary and exile. There was no pleasing recollection annexed to this spot; it was a remembrancer of shame, sorrow, and remorse. Yet, such is the power of objects once familiar, revisited after absence, that my eye ran over them with delight, I felt lightened from the weariness of the journey, and found that the recollection of pains past over and subdued was capable of being made a source of gratification. The mountains among which I had wandered, and consumed, as it were, the last dregs of my insanity, surrounded me; the path in which I was travelling led along one of their ridges. I had performed this part of my journey by night; and the first gleams of day now began to streak the horizon. I looked towards the cottage, the distant view of which had so often, in moments of the deepest despair, awakened in my heart the soothing of sympathy and affection. I saw that as yet it remained in its forlorn condition, and had undergone no repair; while the lands around, which had lately experienced the superintendante of Marguerite, had met with more attention, and began to resume the marks of culture. I sighed for the return of those days and that situation, which, while present to me, had passed unheeded and unenjoyed.

I repaired to the house of my late protector, now the residence of Monsieur Grimseld. He was a meagre, shrivelled figure; and, though scarcely arrived at the middle

middle of human life, exhibited all the marks of a premature old age. I disclosed myself to him, and began warmly to expostulate with him upon the profligacy of his conduct. He changed colour, and betrayed symptoms of confusion, the moment I announced myself. While I pressed him with the barbarity of his conduct, the dreadful effects it had already produced, and the incontestible justice of my claim, he stammered, and began to propose terms of accommodation. During this conversation we were alone. After some time however a servant entered the room, and the countenance of the master assumed an expression of satisfaction and confidence. He eagerly seized on the occasion which presented itself, and, instantly changing his tone, called on his servant to assist him in securing a criminal against the state. I at first resisted, but Grimseld, perceiving this, applied to his bell with great vehemence, and three other servants made their appearance, whose employment was in the field, but who had now accidentally come into the house for refreshment. I had arms; but I found it impracticable to effect my escape; and I soon felt that, by yielding to the impulse of indignation, and punishing Grimseld on the spot for his perfidy, I might ruin, but could not forward, the affair in which I was engaged.

I was conducted to prison; and the thoughts produced in me by this sudden reverse, were extremely melancholy and discouraging. Grimseld was a man of opulence and power—I was without friends, or the means of procuring friends. The law expressly condemned my return—and what had I not to fear from law, when abetted and enforced by the hand of power? I might be imprisoned for ten years—I might be imprisoned for life. I began earnestly to wish that I had remained with my family, and given up at least all present hopes of redress. It would be a dreadful accumulation of all my calamities, if now at last I and my children were destined

to suffer, perhaps to perish, in a state of separation—and the last consolations of the wretched, these of suffering, sympathising and condoling with each other, were denied us.

Full of these tragical forebodings, I threw myself at first on the floor of my cell in a state little short of the most absolute despair. I exclaimed upon my adverse fortune, which was never weary of persecuting me. I apostrophised, with tender, and distracted accents, my wife and children, from whom I now seemed to be cut off by an everlasting divorce. I called upon death to put an end to these tumults and emotions of the soul, which were no longer to be bore.

It a short time however I recovered myself, procured the implements of writing, and drew up, in the strong and impressive language of truth, a memorial to the council of the state. I was next to consider how this was to reach its destination—for there was some danger that it might be intercepted by the vigilance and malignity of my adversary. I desired to speak with the keeper of the prison. He had some recollection of me, and a still more distinct one of my family. He concurred with the general sentiment, in a strong aversion to the character of Grimseld. As I pressed upon him the hardship of my case, and the fatal consequences with which it might be attended, I could perceive that he fully entered into the feeling with which I wished him to be impressed.—He blamed my rashness in returning to Switzerland in defiance of the positive prohibition that had been issued; but promised at all events that my paper should be delivered to the president to-morrow morning.

I remained three days without an answer, and these days were to me an eternity. I anticipated every kind of misfortune—I believed that law and malice had succeeded to the subversion of equity. At length however *I was delivered from my apprehensions and perplexity,*
and

and summoned to appear before the council. It was well for me perhaps that I had to do with a government so simple and moderate as that of Switzerland. I obtained redress. It was referred to an arbitration of neighbours to set a fair price on my property, and then decreed that if mons. Grimseld refused the purchase, the sum should be paid me out of the coffers of the state. He was also condemned in a certain fine for the fraud he had attempted to commit. The affair, thus put in train, was soon completed; and I returned with joy, having effected the object of my journey, to my anxious and expecting family. Soon after we removed to the spot we had chosen on the eastern bank of the lake, where we remained for the six following years in a state of peace and tranquility.

CHAP. XI.

IT was in the evening of a summer's day in the latter end of the year fifteen hundred and forty-four, that a stranger arrived at my habitation. He was feeble, emaciated and pale, his forehead full of wrinkles, and his hair and beard as white as snow. Care was written in his face; it was easy to perceive that he had suffered much from distress of mind; yet his eye was still quick and lively, with a strong expression of suspiciousness and anxiety. His garb, which externally consisted of nothing more than a robe of russet brown, with a girdle of the same, was coarse, threadbare and ragged. He supported his tottering steps with a staff; and, having lost his foreteeth, his speech was indistinct and difficult to be comprehended. His wretched appearance excited my compassion, at the same time that I could easily discern, beneath all its disadvantages, that he was no common beggar or rustic. Ruined and squalid as he appeared, I thought

thought I could perceive traces in his countenance of what had formerly been daring enterprise, profound meditation, and generous humanity.

I saw that he was much fatigued, and I invited him to rest himself upon the bench before the door. I set before him bread and wine, and he partook of both. I asked him his name and his country. He told me that he was a Venetian, and that his name, as nearly as I could recollect, was signor Francesco Zampieri. He seemed however averse to speaking, and he requested me to suffer him to pass the night in my habitation. There was nothing singular in the request, a hospitality of this sort being the practice of the neighbourhood; and humanity would have prompted my compliance, if I had not been still more strongly urged by an undefinable curiosity, that began to spring up in my bosom. I prepared for him a camp-bed in a summer-house at the end of my garden. As soon as it was ready, he desired to be left alone, that he might seek in rest some relief from the fatigue he had undergone.

He retired early; and therefore, soon after day-break the next morning, I waited on him to enquire how he rested. He led me out into the fields; the morning was genial and exhilarating. We proceeded, till we came to a retired spot, which had frequently been the scene of my solitary meditations, and there seated ourselves upon the bank. We had been mutually silent during the walk. As soon as we were seated, the stranger began: You are, I understand, a Frenchman, and your name the count de St. Leon? I bowed assent.

St. Leon, said he, there is something in your countenance and manner that prepossesses me in your favour. The only thing I have left to do in the world, is to die; and what I seek at present, is a friend who will take care that I shall be suffered to die in peace. Shall I trust you? Will you be that friend to me?

I was

I was astonished at this way of commencing his confidence in me ; but I did not hesitate to promise that he should not find me deficient in any thing that became a man of humanity and honour.

You do not, I think, live alone ? You have a wife and children ?

I have.

Yet none of them were at home when I arrived last night. You brought yourself to the summer-house every thing that was necessary for my accommodation.

I did so. But I have a wife to whom I have been married seventeen years, and with whom I have no reserves. I told her of your arrival ! I spoke of your appearance ; I mentioned your name.

It is no matter. She has not seen me. My name is not Zampieri ; I am no Venetian.

Who are you then ?

That you shall never know. It makes no part of the confidence I design to repose in you. My name shall be buried with me in the grave ; nor shall any one who has hitherto known me, know how, at what time, or on what spot of earth I shall terminate my existence. The cloud of oblivion shall shelter me from all human curiosity. What I require of you is that you pledge your honour and the faith of a man, that you will never reveal to your wife, your children, or any human being, what you may hereafter know of me, and that no particular that relates to my history shall be disclosed, till at least one hundred years after my decease.

Upon these conditions I am sorry that I must decline your confidence. My wife is a part of myself ; for the last six years at least I have had no thought in which she has not participated ; and these have been the most tranquil and happy years of my life. My heart was formed by nature for social ties ; habit has confirmed the propensity ;

Well, dear Marguerite, I am sorry you must wait; but you must learn to have patience.

Do you know, papa, I walked in the garden before breakfast. And so, not thinking of any thing, I came to the summer-house; and I tried to open the door, but I could not. I found it was locked. So I thought Julia was there, and I knocked and called Julia, but nobody answered. So then I knew Julia was not there, for I was sure she would have opened the door. So I climbed upon the stump of the pear-tree, and tried to look in at the window; but the shutters were shut, and I could not get to see over the top of them. And I walked all round the summer-house, and all the shutters were shut. Papa, I wish you would not let a man get into the summer-house, who shuts all the shutters, and locks the door. You always used to let me go into every room I liked; and, do you know, I think none but bad people lock and bolt themselves up so. It puts me in mind of the giants with their draw-bridges and their pit-falls; I shall be quite afraid of this frightful old man.

This prattle of the child was nothing; yet it increased the embarrassment of my situation, and made the peculiarity of the case more conspicuous. Finding her pertinacious in insisting upon a topic that was disagreeable to me, her mother called her from me, and put her upon some occupation that served to divert her attention. I felt like a person that was guilty of some crime; and this consideration and kindness of my wife, when I seemed to myself to deserve her reproach, had not the power to calm my uneasiness.

These little occurrences appeared like the beginning of a separation of interests, and estrangement of hearts. I tasked myself severely. I summoned the whole force of my mind, that I might strictly consider what it was in which I was about to engage. If this slight and casual hint of a secret is felt both by Marguerite and myself
with

with so much uneasiness⁴ and embarrassment, what will be our situation, if I go on to accept the stranger's confidence, and become the depository of an arcadium so important as he represents it to be? He declares himself able to bestow upon me the highest opulence; what will be the feelings of my wife and children, when they see my condition suddenly changed from its present humble appearance to splendour and wealth, without being able to assign the source of this extraordinary accession?

It is difficult to conceive a family-picture more enviable, than that to which I was now continually present, and of which I formed a part. We had been happy on the banks of the Garonne, and we had pictured to ourselves a plan of happiness immediately on our arrival in the city of Constance. But these were little and imperfect, compared with what I now enjoyed. In the first situation my children were infants, and in the second the eldest was but ten years of age. The mother was now thirty-five; and she had lost, in my eyes at least, none of her personal attractions. Her intellectual accomplishments were much greater than ever. Her understanding was matured, her judgment decided, her experience more comprehensive. As she had a greater compass of materials to work upon, her fancy was more playful, her conversation richer, and her reflections more amusing and profound. The matron character she had acquired, had had no other effect on her feelings, than to render them more deep, more true and magnetical. Her disposition was more entirely affectionate, than it had been, even in the first year of our cohabitation. Her attachments to her children was exemplary, and her vigilance uninterrupted; and, for myself, she was accustomed, in all that related to our mutual love, to enter into my sentiments and inclinations with so just a tone of equality and kindness, that we seemed to be two bodies animated by a single soul. If the mother was improved, the children
were

were still more improved. In their early years we are attached to our offspring, merely because they are ours, and in a way that has led superficial speculators to consider the attachment, less as the necessary operation of a sensible and conscious mind, than as a wise provision of nature for the perpetuation of the species. But, as they grow up, the case is different. Our partiality is then confirmed or diminished, by qualities visible to an impartial by-stander as really as to ourselves. They then cease to be merely the objects of our solicitude, and become our companions, the partners of our sentiments, and the counsellors of our undertakings. Such at least was my case at the present period. Charles, who was now sixteen, was manly beyond his years, while the native fire of his disposition was tempered by adversity, by an humble situation, and by the ardour of filial and fraternal affection. Julia, who was two years younger, became daily more interesting by the mildness of her disposition and the tenderness of her sensibility. Louisa was only twelve; but, as she was extremely notable, and had an uncommonly quick and accurate spirit of imitation, she rendered herself exceedingly useful to her mother. Marguerite, the play-thing and amusement of the family, had, as I have said, just completed the eighth year of her age.

One exquisite source of gratification, when it is not a source of uneasiness, to speak from my own experience, which a parent finds in the society of his children, is their individuality. They are not puppets, moved with wires, and to be played on at will. Almost from the hour of their birth, they have a will of their own, to be consulted and negotiated with. We may say to them, as Adam to the general mother of mankind, But now thou wert flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone; and, even now, thou standest before me, vested in the prerogatives of sentiment and reason; a living being to be regarded with attention and deference, to be courted, not compelled,

compelled, susceptible of the various catalogue of human passions, capable of resentment and gratitude, of indignation and love, of perverseness and submission. It is because thou art thus formed that I love thee. I cannot be interested about objects inanimate or brute. I require a somewhat that shall exercise my judgment, and awaken my moral feelings. It is necessary to me to approve myself, and be approved by another. I rejoice to stand before you, at once the defendant and the judge. I rejoice in the restraint to which your independent character subjects me, and it will be my pride to cultivate that independence in your mind. I would negotiate for your affections and confidence, and not be loved by you, but in proportion as I shall have done something to deserve it. I could not congratulate myself upon your correspondence to my wishes, if it had not been in your power to withhold it.

While I indulge this vein of reflection, I seem again to see my family, as they surrounded me in the year fifteen hundred and forty-four, Marguerite the partner of my life, Charles the brother of my cares, the blooming Julia, the sage Louisa, and the playful cadette of the family. How richly furnished, how chearful, how heart-reviving appeared to me the apartment in which they were assembled! I dwell upon the image with fond affection and lingering delight. Where are they now? How has all this happiness been maliciously undermined, and irrevocably destroyed! To look back on it, it seems like the idle fabric of a dream. I awake and find myself alone! Were there really such persons? Where are they dispersed? Whither are they gone? Oh, miserable solitude and desertion, to which I have so long been condemned! I see nothing around me, but speechless walls, or human faces that say as little to my heart as the walls themselves! How palsied is my soul! How withered my affections!—But I will not anticipate.

CHAP. XII.

I Carried food to the stranger as occasion required in the course of the day. He seemed indisposed to speak, and we exchanged scarcely more than two or three words. The next morning was the implied time to which the question of his confidence was deferred, and I went to him with the full resolution of refusing it. Whether it were that he discerned this resolution in my countenance, or that, in the interval that elapsed, he had formed a meaner opinion of my character, and thought me unfit for the purposes he intended I should answer, certain it is that he anticipated me. At the same time he magnified the importance of the gifts he had to communicate. He expressed himself astonished at the precipitateness of his yesterday's conduct. It was not till after much trial and long probation that he could choose himself a confident. I was not at present fit for the character, nor perhaps ever should be. The talent he possessed was one, upon which the fate of nations and of the human species might be made to depend. God had given it for the best and highest purposes; and the vessel, in which it was deposited, must be purified from the alloy of human frailty. It might be abused, and applied to the most atrocious designs. It might blind the understanding of the wisest, and corrupt the integrity of the noblest. It might overturn kingdoms, and change the whole order of human society into anarchy and barbarism. It might render its possessor the universal plague or the universal tyrant of mankind.

Go, St. Leon! added the stranger, you are not qualified for so important a trust. You are not yet purged of imbecility and weakness. Though you have passed through much, and had considerable experience, you are yet a child. I had heard your history, and expected to find you a different man. Go, and learn to know yourself

self for what you are, frivolous and insignificant, worthy to have been born a peasant, and not fitted to adorn the rolls of chivalry or the rank to which you were destined!

There was something so impressive in the rebuke and contempt of this venerable sage, that made it impossible to contend with them. Never was there a man more singular, and in whom were united greater apparent contradictions. Observe him in a quiet and unanimated moment, you might almost take him for a common beggar, a poor, miserable wretch, in whom life lingered, and insensate stupidity reigned. But, when his soul was touched in any of those points in which it was most alive, he rose at once, and appeared a giant. His voice was the voice of thunder; and rolling in a rich and sublime swell, it arrested and stilled, while it withered all the nerves of the soul. His eye-beam sat upon your countenance, and seemed to look through you. You wished to escape from its penetrating power, but you had not the strength to move. I began to feel as if it were some mysterious and superior being in human form, and not a mortal, with whom I was concerned.

What a strange and contradictory being is man! I had gone to the summer-house this morning, with a firm resolution to refuse the gifts and the communication of the stranger. I felt as if lightened from a burthen which the whole preceeding day had oppressed me, while I formed this resolution. I was chearful, and conscious of rectitude and strength of mind. How cheaply we prize a gift which we imagine to be already in our power! With what philosophical indifference do we turn it on every side, depreciate its worth, magnify its disadvantages, and then pique ourselves upon the sobriety and justice of the estimate we have made! Thus it was with me in the present transaction. But, when I had received the check of the stranger, and saw the proposed benefit removed to a vast and uncertain distance, then it resumed
all

all its charms. Then the contrast of wealth and poverty flashed full upon my soul. Before, I had questioned the reality of the stranger's pretensions, and considered whether he might not be an artful imposter. But now all was clearness and certainty. The advantages of wealth passed in full review before my roused imagination. I saw horses, palaces and their furniture ; I saw the splendour of exhibition and the trains of attendants, objects which had been for ever dear to my puerile imagination ; I contemplated the honour, love, obedience, troops of friends, which are so apt to attend upon wealth, when disbursed with a moderate degree of dignity and munificence. When I compared this with my present poverty and desertion, the meanness of our appearance, our daily labours, the danger that an untoward accident might sink us in the deepest distress, and the hopelessness that my son or his posterity should ever rise to that honour and distinction to which they had once been destined, the effect was too powerful.

Another feeling came still further in aid of this. It was the humiliating impression which the stranger had left upon my mind. This seemed to be his great art, if in reality his conduct is to be imputed to art. There is no enemy to virtue so fatal as a sense of degradation. Self-applause is our principal support in every liberal and elevated act of virtue. If this ally can be turned against us, if we can be made to ascribe baseness, effeminacy, want of spirit and adventure to our virtuous resolutions, we shall then indeed feel ourselves shaken. This was precisely my situation. The figure I made in my own eyes was mean ; I was impatient of my degradation ; I believed that I had shown myself uxorious and effeminate, at a time that must have roused in me the spirit of a man, if there had been a spark of manly spirit latent in my breast. This impatience co-operated with the temptations

tations of the stranger, and made me anxious to possess what he offered to my acceptance.

I reasoned thus with myself: What excites my scruples is simply the idea of having one single secret from my wife and family. This scruple is created by the singular and unprecedented confidence in which we have been accustomed to live. Other men have their secrets: nor do they find their domestic tranquility broken by that circumstance. The merchant does not call his wife into consultation upon his ventures; the statesman does not unfold to her his policy and his projects: the warrior does not take her advice upon the plan of his campaign; the poet does not concert with her his flights and his episodes. To other men the domestic scene is the relaxation of their cares; when they enter it, they dismiss the business of the day, and call another cause. I only have concentrated in it the whole of my existence. By this means I have extinguished in myself the true energy of the human character. A man can never be respectable in the eyes of the world or in his own, except so far as he stands by himself and is truly independent. He may have friends; he may have domestic connections; but he must not in these connections lose his individuality. Nothing truly great was ever achieved, that was not executed or planned in solitary seclusion.

But, if these reasons are sufficient to prove that the plan I have lately pursued is fundamentally wrong, how much more will the importance of what is proposed by the stranger, plead my excuse for deviating from it? How bitterly have I lamented the degradation of my family! Shall I not seize this opportunity of reinstalling them in their hereditary honours? I deemed the ruin I had brought upon them irreparable; shall I not embrace the occasion of atoning for my fault? No man despises wealth, who fully understands the advantages it confers. Does it not confer the means of cultivating our powers?

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Does it not open to us the career of honour, which is shut against the unknown and obscure? Does it not conciliate the prepossessions of mankind, and gain for us an indulgent and liberal construction? Does it not inspire us with graceful confidence, and animate us to generous adventure? The poor man is denied every advantage of education, and wears out his life in labour and ignorance. From offices of trust, from opportunities of distinction, he is ignominiously thrust aside; and, though he should sacrifice his life for the public cause, he dies unhonoured and unknown. If by any accident he comes into possession of those qualities which, when discerned and acknowledged, command the applause of mankind, who will listen to him? His appearance is mean; and the fastidious auditor turns from him ere half his words are uttered. He has no equipage and attendants, no one to blow the trumpet before him and proclaim his rank; how can he propose any thing that shall be worthy of attention? Aware of the prepossession of mankind in this respect, he is alarmed and overwhelmed with confusion before he opens his lips. Filled with the consciousness of his worth, he anticipates the unmerited contempt that is prepared to oppress him, and his very heart dies within him. Add to these circumstances, the constitution of our nature, the various pleasures of which it is adapted to partake, and how many of these pleasures it is in the power of wealth to procure. Yes; an object like this will sufficiently apologize for me to those for whose sake alone it was estimable in my sight. It is indeed nothing but our poverty and the lowness of our station, that have thus produced in us an habitual and unreserved communication of sentiments. Wealth would to a certain degree destroy our contact; and take off the wonder that we had each our thoughts that were not put into common stock.

These

These considerations decided my choice. I was not indeed without some variations of mind, and some compunction of heart for the resolution I had espoused. The longer the stranger remained with me, the more evident it was that there was something mysterious between us; and the unreserved affection and union that had lately reigned under my roof, suffered materially the effects of it. The stranger had been led to my cottage in the first instance, by the entire solitude in which it was placed. There was nothing about which he was so solicitous as concealment; the most atrocious criminal could not be more alarmed at the idea of being discovered. I was unable to account for this; but I was now too anxious for his stay and the promised reward, not to be alert in gratifying all his wishes. The most inviolable secrecy therefore was enjoined to the whole family; and the younger branches of it, particularly the little Marguerite, it was necessary to keep almost immured, to prevent the danger of their reporting any thing out of the house, that might be displeasing to the stranger, and fatal to my expectations. Upon the whole my situation was eminently an uneasy one. No experiment can be more precarious than that of a half-confidence; and nothing but the sincere affection that was entertained for me could have rendered it successful in this instance. My family felt that they were trusted by me only in points where it was impossible to avoid it, and that I was not therefore properly entitled to their co-operation; I was conscious of ingratitude in making them no return for their fidelity. They kept my secret because they were solicitous to oblige me, not from any conviction that they were conferring on me a benefit, but, on the contrary, suspecting that the object as to which they were blindly assisting me, would prove injurious to me, as well as to themselves.

The

The health of the stranger visibly declined, but this was a circumstance which he evidently regarded with complacency. It was the only source of consolation to which he appeared susceptible; his mind was torn with painful remembrances, and agitated with terrible forebodings. He abhorred solitude, and yet found no consolation in society. I could not be much with him; my duty to my family who were principally supported by my labour, was a call too imperious to be neglected. Even when I was with him, he commonly testified no desire for conversation. Stay with me, he was accustomed to say; give me as much of your time as you can; but do not talk. Upon these occasions, he would sit sometimes with his arms folded, and with the most melancholy expression imaginable. He would then knit his brows, wring his hands with a sadness that might have excited pity in the hardest breast, or, with both hands closed, the one clasping the other, strike himself impatiently on the forehead. At other times, he would rise from his seat, pace the room with hurried and unquiet steps, and then again throw himself on his couch in the greatest agitation. His features were often convulsed with agony. Often have I wiped away the sweat, which would suddenly burst out in large drops on his forehead. At those seasons he would continually mutter words to himself, the sense of which it was impossible for me to collect. I could perceive however that he often repeated the names of Clara!—Henry!—a wife!—a friend!—a friend!—and then he would groan as if his heart were bursting. Sometimes, in the midst of these recollections, he would pass the back of his hand over his eyes; and then, looking at it, shaking his head, and biting his under lip, exclaim with a piteous accent, Dry!—dry! all the moisture of my frame is perished! Then, as if recovering himself, *he* would cry with a startled and terrified voice, Who is *there*? *St. Leon* Come to me! Let me feel that there is a human

a human being near me! I often call for you; but I find myself alone, deserted, friendless!—friendless!

At times when his recollection was more complete, he would say, I know I tire you! Why should I tire you? What gratification can it be to me to occasion emotions of disgust? Upon these occasions, I endeavoured to soothe him, and assured him I found pleasure in administering to his relief. But he replied, No, no: do not flatter me! It is long since I have heard the voice of flattery! I never loved it! No, I know I am precluded from ever exciting friendship or sympathy! Why am I not dead? Why do I live, a burthen to myself, useful to none? My secret, I could almost resolve, should die with me; but you have earned, and you shall receive it.

The stranger was not always in this state of extreme anguish, nor always indisposed to converse. He had lucid intervals; and could beguile the sorrow of his heart with social communication. We sometimes talked of various sciences and branches of learning; he appeared to be well informed in them all. His observations were ingenious; his language copious; his illustrations fanciful and picturesque; his manner bold and penetrating. It was easy to observe in him the marks of a vigorous and masculine genius. Sometimes we discussed the events at that time going on in the world. When we discoursed of events that had passed, and persons that had died, more than a century before, the stranger often spoke of them in a manner as if he had been an eye-witness and directly acquainted with the objects of our discourse. This I ascribed to the vividness of his conceptions, and the animation of his language. He however often checked himself in this peculiarity, and always carefully avoided what could lead to any thing personal to himself. I described to him the scenes of my youth, and related my subsequent history; he on his part was

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invincibly silent on every circumstance of his country, his family and his adventures.

The longer I was acquainted with him, the more my curiosity grew. I was restless and impatient to learn something respecting a man who thus wrapped himself up in mystery and reserve. Often I threw out, as it were, a line by which to fathom his secret. I talked of various countries, I mentioned different kinds of calamities and even of crimes, that by some incidental allusion I might discover at unawares his country, his connections, or the nature of his history. When any thing that offered seemed to lead to the desired point, I doubled my questions, and endeavoured to construct them with the skill of a crafty litigant in a court of justice. There were some subjects, the very mention of which gave him uneasiness, and upon which he immediately silenced me; but these were not of themselves enough to afford me a clue, or to furnish materials out of which for me to construct the history of the stranger. He did not always perceive the drift of my questions and snares; but, when he did, he generally became loud, resentful and furious. There was nothing else that so completely roused his indignation.

St. Leon! said he to me one day, silence this inquisitive temper of yours, check your rash and rude curiosity! The only secret I have that can be of any importance to you, you shall one day know. But my country, my family, my adventures, I have once told you, and I tell you again, you shall never know. That knowledge can be of moment to no one, and it shall never be disclosed. When this heart ceases to beat, that tale shall cease to have a place on the face of the earth. Why should my distresses and disgraces be published to any one? Is it not enough, that they have lacerated my bosom, that they have deprived me of friends, that they have visited me with every adversity and every anguish,
that

that they have bowed me down to the earth, that they have made thought and remembrance and life itself a burthen too heavy to be borne? Your present injudicious conduct, if persisted in, will have the effect of driving me from your roof, of turning me once more upon the world, upon that world that I hate, upon that world whose bruises and ill-treatment I feel in every fibre of my frame, of exposing me again to fresh persecutions, and causing me to perish miserably in a dungeon, or die upon a scaffold. Spare me, my generous host; I know you are capable of generosity. Indeed I have endured enough to satiate the rage of malice itself. You see what I suffer from the rage and tempest of my own thoughts, even without the assistance of any external foe. Let me die in that degree of tranquility I am able to attain! I will not trouble you long!

At another time he addressed me in a different style. You see, St. Leon, that the anguish of mind I endure is such as is ordinarily attributed to the recollection of great crimes; and you have very probably conjectured that in my case it arises from the same source. If you have, I forgive you; but I assure you that you are mistaken. Take from yourself that uneasiness, if it has ever visited you; you are not giving sanctuary to a villain! I am innocent. I can take no crime to my charge. I have suffered more almost than man ever suffered; but I have sinned little. The cause of my uneasiness and prime source of all my misfortunes, I dare not disclose to you. Be contented with the plan of my conduct. I have digested my purpose. I have determined where to speak and where to be silent.

The more I saw of this man, the more strange and unaccountable appeared to me every thing that related to him. Why was he so poor, possessing, as he pretended, inexhaustible wealth? Why was he unhappy, with so great talents and genius, and such various information?

Why

Why was he friendless, being, as he solemnly assured me, so perfectly innocent, and of consequence so respectable? That he was an impostor, every thing that I saw of him forbade me to believe. His sorrows were too profound and excruciating, for it to be possible for me to rank them among the actions that a man may play. The greatness of his powers, the dignity of his carriage, the irresistible appearance of sincerity that sparkled in his eye, and modulated his voice, fully convinced me that he really was what he pretended to be. I had heard of men who, under the pretence of alchemy, fastened themselves upon persons possessing sums of money, and, beguiling them with a delusive expectation of wealth, reduced them to beggary and ruin. One such person I had had a brief connection with during my residence in the Bordelois, though, finding the incident by no means essential to the progress of my history, I have passed it over, together with many others, in silence. But nothing could be more unlike than that man and the person respecting whom I was now concerned. In reality I possessed at that time, if I may be allowed to say so, a more than common insight into the characters of mankind, so as to be little likely, except under the tyranny of passion, as in the instance of gaming, to be made the prey of imposition. I had studied my species as it exhibits itself in history, and had mixed with it in various scenes and under dissimilar aspects. I had accordingly, in the transaction I have just alluded to, soon detected the plans of the villain who expected to delude me. But what could be the purpose of the stranger in this respect? The pretended alchemist in France had obtained a certain sum of money of me, and demanded more. The stranger never made such a demand of me; and perfectly knew that, even if I had been inclined, I was not able to supply him. The alchemist had amused me with descriptions of various processes for the transmutation of metals,

metals, had exhibited his crucibles and retorts, and employed a sort of dramatic *COUP D'ŒIL* for the purpose of awakening my curiosity, and stimulating my passions. The stranger had simply stated, in the plainest and most direct manner, that it was in his power to enrich me; but had been silent as to the manner of producing the wealth he promised, and had abstained from every effort to intoxicate my mind. I felt therefore in this instance the effect, that, without being able to solve the difficulties and contrarieties that hung about him, I yet believed his assertions, nor was the inscrutability of his history and his motives capable of shaking my confidence.

One day, during the period of his concealment, certain officers of the bishop of Constance, accompanied by a foreigner in a Neapolitan habit, came to my house, and, as it proved, with the express purpose of searching for the man who had put himself under my protection. Charles and myself were at work in the fields within sight of the lake. Their appearance first caught the attention of Charles as they approached the shore, and he enquired of me respecting the habit of the foreigner which was different from any he had been accustomed to see. While we were yet speaking, I observed in them an intention to land within sight of my cottage. This was an uncommon circumstance; our privacy was rarely invaded, and we lived almost as much out of the world as we should have done in the remotest island of the Atlantic ocean. I reasoned in my own mind upon their appearance; they had little resemblance to a party of pleasure; the habit of the officers of justice I was perfectly acquainted with; and the suspicion of the real nature of their errand immediately darted on my thoughts. Without saying a word to Charles on the subject, I hastened with all the speed I could exert to the apartment of the stranger, and acquainted him with what I had seen. He concurred with me in the ideas I had formed, and appeared much
shocked

shocked at the intelligence. There was however no time to be lost; and, after having for a moment given vent to an anguish, which was too powerful to be suppressed, he withdrew as hastily as he could from the summer-house, and betook himself to the woods. He recommended to me to leave him, telling me that he could conceal himself most effectually alone, and observing that it would be necessary for me to meet the officers, and endeavour as much as possible to remove their suspicions.

Accordingly, as soon as he was gone, I threw open the windows of the summer-house, removed the shutters, and took from it, as effectually as I could, all appearance of having served as a place of concealment. This was a precaution which the stranger had on a former occasion recommended to me. It fortunately happened that Julia and the little Marguerite were gone out together in the fields on the eastern side of my cottage; otherwise infallibly the child by her innocent prattle, and perhaps Julia by the apprehensive sensibility of her temper, would have betrayed our secret, or at least have suggested to the officers a feeling as if, by a longer stay, and more diligent search, they might possibly succeed in the object of their expedition. As it was, I received them at the door, and learned from their own mouths the nature of their errand. Of Charles, whom they had crossed in the fields, they had simply asked whether they were right as to the name of the person who was proprietor of the cottage before them. They described to me with great accuracy the appearance of the stranger, and insisted that he had been an inhabitant of my cottage. They told me, they were well informed that the summer-house in my garden had carefully been shut up for more than a month past, and that some person had been concealed there. I was interested in the distress of the stranger; I was *impressed with the dignity of his character*; I implicitly
confided

confided in his assertions of innocence and the unjust persecution that he suffered; I was not insensible to the proposed reward, the realising of which probably depended on his safety. But, most of all, I considered my honour as pledged for the protection of the man who had thus cast himself upon my fidelity, and believed that I should be everlastingly disgraced if he suffered any evil through treachery or neglect on my part. I therefore answered confidently to the officers that they were misinformed, and offered to conduct them over every part of my house and demesnes, that they might satisfy themselves by inspection that there was no person concealed any where within my possessions. I should have been better pleased, openly to have defied their interrogatories, and to have asked them whether, allowing their suspicions to be just, they were entitled to believe that I was such a villain, as to betray a man who had thrown himself upon my generosity? But, though this conduct would have had a greater appearance of gallantry, I believed it would have less of the reality, as it would have strengthened their idea of my participation, and increased the danger of the person I was bound to protect.

They accepted my offer of submitting to their search, and made a strict examination of every place about my habitation, in which the stranger could be concealed. Disappointed here, they endeavoured by threats to discover whether I was able to give them any information. To these I calmly answered, that they had mistaken my character, that though I was a poor man, I had not forgotten that I was noble, that they were already in possession of my spontaneous answer to their enquiries, and that, in no case, and upon no supposition, should tyranny and ill-treatment extort from me, what I was not in the first instance disposed to give. My wife was present during this conversation, and, I could perceive, felt an alarm
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for my danger, that she would have been incapable of feeling for a danger to herself.

Though I was extremely anxious that these men should be disappointed in the object of their expedition, yet I did not neglect this opportunity of endeavouring to gain satisfaction for my own curiosity. I remarked at first that the Neapolitan was an inquisitor, and this circumstance had given additional poignancy to the uneasiness of Marguerite. But the accusations of which the inquisition at this time took cognizance were so numerous, the ecclesiastical power continually usurping upon the civil, that I was little assisted in the judgment I was desirous to frame, by any inference to be deduced from this circumstance. I questioned directly, with an air as if it were merely in the way of conversation, what was the crime of the man of whom they were in pursuit, and what was the cause forcible enough to induce a Neapolitan inquisitor to follow so decrepid and forlorn an individual as he described, beyond the Alps, and almost to the banks of the Danube? To this he answered roughly, that, though he was not able to discover the object of his search, he was by no means convinced that I was not his abettor and accomplice; and that, as to his crime, that was not to be named: the welfare of Christendom demanding, that the criminal, and the memory of his offences, should be buried together. At the same time he warned me to consider well what I did, before I exposed myself to be overwhelmed by the vengeance of the court of which he was a member. To this I answered haughtily, that I had already condescended to repel his suspicion, and that no other man than an inquisitor would have had the stupidity or the audaciousness to question my veracity. I added, that I was perfectly acquainted with the nature of his court, which was the object of abhorrence to the whole Christian world; but that he was mistaken, if he supposed that the detestable nature of its proceedings would

would enable him to practise every sort of outrage with impunity. The officers withdrew into the little inclosure in front of my cottage, and I overheard them consulting whether, having failed in their principal object, they should carry me a prisoner along with them. The firmness of my manner however had awed them, and the fearlessness I expressed seemed to them to arise from a consciousness of innocence. They at length departed as they came.

I watched them from my cottage as they descended to the shore, and it was with no little pleasure that I perceived them re-embark, and stand off for the opposite side of the lake. This spectacle for a time entirely engaged me, and when I turned from the door, I observed that my beloved Marguerite had been in tears. She endeavoured to hide this circumstance from my sight. I took her affectionately by the hand, and, pressing her to my bosom, intreated her not to make herself uneasy.

Ah, Reginald! said she, how can I avoid being uneasy, when I see you exposed to this imminent danger? I thought that, in forfeiting our fortune and our rank, and retiring to this obscure and sequestered situation, we might at least promise ourselves the blessing of the poor, oblivion and security; and that should have consoled me for all I have lost. Who is this man, that is thus mysteriously hidden among us? What is the guilt from the punishment of which he thus anxiously withdraws himself? What can be the nature of your connection with such a man? And what will be the issue of so perilous an adventure?

I hesitated. I knew not what to answer to so earnest an anxiety. I was melted at the distress and the affection of Marguerite. She saw my embarrassment, and proceeded.

Mistake me not, my beloved! said she. I have no desire to pry into what you are willing to conceal. Forgive the perturbation which has poured itself out in these
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involuntary questions. I repose an entire confidence in you. I would sooner die than interfere with any object you have at heart. Go on according to the dictates of your own judgment, undisturbed by me. I will not doubt that you have sufficient reasons for what you communicate, and what you suppress. I am grieved indeed at the interruption of our obscure and unambitious tranquillity; but I had resolved not to trouble you with my uneasiness and apprehensions. The incident of this morning has extorted them from me; but I will behave better in future.

This scene was extremely distressing to me. My wife was oppressed with fears, and I had nothing to answer her. The consolations that rose up in my own mind, I was prevented from communicating. The more generously she confided in me, the more I felt the ungracious and disagreeable nature of the concealment I practised. I endeavoured however to encourage myself with the idea, that the labour would not be long, and the harvest would prove abundant. I said in my own mind, The worst is now over; the business has been commenced; the shock to my own family has actually occurred; I must go on resolutely, and shut my eyes to the temporarily displeasing circumstances that may be connected with the completing my object.

CHAP. XIII.

ANOTHER source of uneasiness was added to the distraction my mind already endured. The stranger did not appear. It was in the morning that the officers of justice arrived; they departed about noon; and in two hours afterwards I entered the wood in search of my guest. The wood was of some leagues in extent; it was

was intersected by paths in various directions; it was interspersed with caverns; its growth was of all kinds, in some places lofty trees that seemed to form a support for the clouds, in others an underwood impenetrable alike to the feet and to the eye. As I entered the wood, I however conceived that the discovery of the stranger, to me who was acquainted with its lurking places, would be an affair of little toil; his feebleness and decrepitude would not suffer him to proceed to any great distance. In this I was mistaken, I looked carefully on all sides; I examined every recess and corner with which I was acquainted; but I found no trace of the stranger. The scene was so complicated and involved that even this was a labour of considerable duration. At length I became satisfied that he was not in the nearer division of the wood.

I paused. I felt at once that it was little less than a Herculean task to hunt through the whole of its dimensions. It would probably be of little use to call, and endeavour by that means to discover his retreat. I knew of no name by which he was to be recognised; and, if my own voice was but a slight resource to penetrate this immense labyrinth of foliage, the voice of the stranger, weakened by age, and now probably still more enfeebled by hunger and fatigue, could not be expected to make itself heard. Beside which, as I knew not what the source of information had been to the officers who had just left me, I was unwilling to expose my guest to the danger that might arise from this mode of seeking him. I could not even be sure, though I had seen their boat stand off from the shore, that they might not afterwards land one or more of their party, and be at this very moment within ear-shot of me. I therefore proceeded in anxiety and silence.

My search was no more successful in the part of the wood with which I was little acquainted, than in the part

part with which I was most familiar. I had already been engaged four hours in the task, and night began to come on. It shut in with heavy clouds, that on all sides appeared deeply loaded with rain. I now began to consider my own situation; and, by comparing circumstances, found that I was at a great distance from my own habitation. There was no direct path by which for me to return. I had proceeded to the right and the left, backward and forward, sometimes by more open paths, and sometimes forcing my way through briars and brushwood, as caprice or the hope of effecting the object of my search happened to guide me. It was therefore no easy matter to guess how I was to return, or even, now that the lowering clouds had covered the horizon with one uniform tint, in which direction lay the cottage or the lake. While I stood contemplating what was to be done, I heard the howling of the wolves at a distance, and their howl had that particular melancholy and discomfiting sound which is well known to precede a coming storm. There was no time to be lost, and accordingly I sat out. I was less anxious to be at home on my own account, than for the sake of quieting the alarms of my family, to whom I had already occasioned too great a portion of uneasiness.

I had not proceeded far before the rain descended in torrents, intermingled with peals of thunder and sheets of lightning. The thunder, interrupted, as it were, from time to time, with the noise of the wild beasts that inhabited the wood, deafened me, while the excessive and instantaneous brilliancy of the lightning occasioned me an intolerable aching in the organ of sight. It rained incessantly for two hours, and I found myself drenched and fatigued with the wet. During this time my progress was small; and I was ever and anon intercepted by the underwood, and could not without repeated experiments discover the means of proceeding. At length
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the rain subsided, and seemed to give place to a gloomy and motionless calm. Soon after, I discovered a light at a distance, and advanced towards it. As I approached, I perceived that it proceeded from a set of banditti, to the amount of fourteen or fifteen persons, sitting round a fire in the mouth of a cavern. I was glad to turn my steps another way, and was for some time afraid that the noise I made in occasionally forcing my way through the bushes, would alarm them, and cost me my life. I however fortunately escaped their notice. This was in a part of the wood remote from the path I ought to have taken, and near the road to Lindau.

The day began to dawn before I reached my own habitation. The conjecture I had made, when I was unawares upon the point of falling into the hands of the banditti, that the road of Lindau was on the other side of their retreat, was of some service to me as an indication where to find the cottage and the lake. This road skirted the wood, on the side nearly opposite to that by which I entered it. The difficulties however I had to encounter were inconceivably great, in endeavouring to preserve my line of direction. After having been compelled four or five times to deviate from the line, it is seldom that a traveller will find himself right in his conjecture as to the direction he is pursuing, unless he has some sensible object as a sort of pole-star by which to govern his route. It happened in this instance that I was more fortunate than I was entitled to expect. I laboured indeed till day-break without getting out of the labyrinth that inclosed me. But the sun no sooner began to lend an imperfect light, than I recognised certain objects which upon some former occasions I had observed, and perceived that my journey was nearly at an end. I entered my cottage, and found Marguerite alone, awake and expecting me.

She had been somewhat uneasy on account of my absence, both from the extreme tempestuousness of the night, and in consequence of the painful sensations the events of the preceeding morning had introduced, events with which it was almost unavoidable for her to imagine that my absence was in some way connected. The period of my insanity in Switzerland might indeed have accustomed her to the irregularity of my motions, but a term of more than six years which had intervened, had produced in her expectations and habits of a different sort. I related to this admirable woman the adventures of the night and the fruitlessness of the search in which I had been engaged; and this openness of communication, un-resembling the nature of the intercourse which had lately existed between us, relieved in some degree my burthened heart, and cheered the drooping spirits of Marguerite. She dropped some consolatory and sadly pleasing tears; and her manner seemed to say, though she would not suffer her tongue to give the idea words, *How sweet are cordiality and confidence!* Oh, do not let our situation, which has deprived us of many other comforts, ever again be robbed of this comfort, which is alone worth all the rest! Though she necessarily felt the presence of the stranger as an evil, the bane of our domestic peace, yet it was impossible for her not to compassionate his fate, and suffer some distress from his strange and abrupt disappearance.

After the conversation which had so eminently served as a relief to our minds, Marguerite left me to repose myself from the extraordinary fatigue I had undergone. But my mind was too much disturbed to suffer me to sink into the arms of forgetfulness. I felt something tragical in the sad destiny of my unfortunate guest. It was but too probable that, in his peculiarly weak state of body, and with his declining health, the being thus exposed for a day and a night to the effects of hunger, of

the inclemency of the air, and the tempestuousness of the elements, would put a close to his existence. I was determined soon to recommence my search. But how could I be sure that I should be more fortunate to-day, than the day before? If I found him, it was most likely I should find him either dead or dying. The degree of intercourse that had taken place between us, had made him occupy a considerable space in my thoughts. The prospects he had opened to me, the conduct he had induced me to adopt, the painful effects and dissatisfaction of mind which had been produced by that conduct as it respected my family, all combined to give me an interest in his fate. I had seen his talents; I had felt his ascendancy; I had experienced that sort of conflict, which appearances of guilt on the one hand, and asseverations of innocence on the other, are calculated to produce in the thoughts and emotions of a by-stander. He was no common man; the expectations and conjectures he excited were of no ordinary sort; and I felt that an army might be destroyed, and a spacious plain covered with the wounded and the dying, without producing greater commotion in my soul.

In the anxious and disturbed state of mind in which I was, the thoughts flow with extraordinary rapidity. It will be found attended with a strange, and, previously to the experiment, incredible mixture of reasoning and passion, of philosophising and fury. I was accordingly conscious at this moment of the truth of the stranger's assertion, that in me he had a protector, not a friend. Friendship is an object of a peculiar sort; the smallest reserve is deadly to it. I may indeed feel the emotions of a friend towards a man who in part conceals from me the thoughts of his heart; but then I must be unconscious of this concealment. The instant I perceive this limitation of confidence, he drops into the class of ordinary men. A divorce is effected between us. Our hearts
which

which grew together, suffer amputation; the arteries are closed; the blood is no longer mutually transfused and confounded. I shall be conscious of all his qualities, for I stand in the place of an impartial umpire. I consider him as a machine capable of so much utility to myself and so much utility to other men. But I do not regard him as the brother of my soul. I do not feel that my life is bound up in his. I do not feel as if, were he to die, the whole world would be at an end to me, and that my happiness would be buried with him for ever in the darkness of the grave. I am not conscious of those emotions which are the most exquisite and indescribable the human mind can experience, and which, being communicated by a sort of electrical stroke to him who is their object, constitute the solace of all his cares, the alleviator of all his calamities, the only nectar and truest balm of human life. For me he stands alone in the world, having companions and associates, the connections, as it were, of mercantile selfishness, or casual jollity and good humour, but no friend. It was thus that I thought of the stranger. He obtained from me the compassion due to a human being, and the respect extorted by his qualities, but nothing calculated radically to disturb the equilibrium of the mind. I looked forward to his death with unruffled thoughts and an unmoistened eye. There was one thing indeed that shook me more deeply; the thought of losing the promised reward, and having exposed myself to the evil of an unquiet and dissatisfied mind in vain.

I rested but a few hours before I set out again upon the search, to which the interposition of the darkness of the preceding night had put an abrupt close. I had the precaution to take with me a slight provision of food and cordials, believing that, if I found the stranger, he would at least be in the greatest need of something reviving and restorative. Charles earnestly intreated to assist me in *the search*, but upon this I put a peremptory prohibition.

It would have been in direct contradiction to what the stranger had most solemnly required of me.

I had already spent several hours in anxiously tracing the wood in every direction, and the period of noon was past, when, approaching an obscure and almost impenetrable thicket, my ear was caught by a low and melancholy sound, which at first I knew not to what I was to ascribe. It however arrested my attention, and caused me to assume an attitude of listening. After the lapse of little more than a minute, the same sound was repeated. I now distinctly perceived that it was the groan of some creature in a very feeble and exhausted state, and immediately suspected that it was the stranger. I went almost round the thicket before I could discern an entrance, and, though I looked with the utmost care, could perceive nothing that the thicket inclosed. The groan was repeated a third time. The long intervals between the groans gave a peculiar melancholy to the effect, and each seemed so much lower than the groan before, that nothing but the ear of anxious attention would have caught it, at the same time that the tone conveyed an idea of stupified, yet vital, anguish. At length I perceived the legs and something of the garb of a man. It was the stranger! He appeared to have crept into the thicket upon his hands and knees. When I forced my way to him, he seemed in the very act of expiring. He was lying on his face, and I raised him a little. His eyes were fixed; his mouth was open; his lips and tongue were parched and dry. I infused a few drops of a cordial into his mouth. For a moment it appeared to produce no sensation, but presently my patient uttered a deep and long-drawn sigh. I repeated my application. As a principal cause of the condition in which I found him was inanition, the stimulant I administered produced a powerful effect. He moved his hands, shuddered, turned his eyes languidly upon me, and, having appeared to

recognise me, shut them hastily again. I moved him slowly and softly into a freer air, and bathed his temples with one of the liquids I had about me. By this time he looked up, and then suddenly round him with a wild and hurried air. He spoke not however; he was speechless. In about a quarter of an hour he relapsed into convulsions, in which it seemed probable he would expire. They lasted a considerable time, and he then sunk into a state of insensibility. I thought he was dead. Thus circumstanced, it was some relief to my humanity to have found him yet alive, and to have received his parting breath. But in a moment his secret and his promises recurred to me with inexpressible anguish, and I inwardly reproached him for having deferred his communication so long, as now to preclude its ever being made. I cannot describe the keenness, the burning and intolerable bitterness of my sensation. Keen it may well be supposed to have been, from its having so instantaneously and forcibly recurred, at a time when other objects seemed to press upon my senses. No one who has not felt what it is to fall in a moment from hope, or, as I should rather say, from assured possession of what his soul most loved and desired, into black and interminable despair, can imagine what was then the state of my mind. The body of my patient slid from my nerveless arms; I lifted up the eyes of rage and frenzy, as if to curse the author of my being; and then fell helpless and immoveable by the side of the stranger.

I felt him move. I heard him sigh. I lifted up my head, and perceived stronger marks of life and sense about him, than had yet displayed themselves. I threw my arms about him; I pressed him to my heart. The emphatical gesture I used seemed to have a sort of magnetical force to rouse his dying powers. With a little assistance from me he sat upright. My assiduity produced wonders. It fortunately happened that this thicket was
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but half a mile from my habitation, and indeed was one of the spots which I had searched without success the day before. About the hour of sun-set, partly by leading, and partly by supporting him, I restored my guest to his former apartment.

He remained speechless, or nearly so. He vented his sensations in sighs, in inward and inarticulate sounds, and, even when he arrived at the power of making himself understood by words, it was only by monosyllables and half-sentences that he conveyed to me his meaning. I now gave up my time almost entirely to an assiduous attendance on the stranger. Every day I expected to be his last; every day was more or less interspersed with symptoms that seemed to menace his instant dissolution. During all this time I remained in the anxious suspense of contending hope and fear. Was it probable that he would ever recover strength enough to confer on me the legacy he had announced? The particulars of his secret I knew not; but, judging from what I had heard of the pretences and pursuits of alchemy, it was natural to suppose that he had a process to communicate, which would require on his part considerable accuracy of recollection, as well as the power of delivering himself in a methodical and orderly discourse.

I was fortunate enough however to perceive, after a tormenting and tedious crisis, that he appeared to be in a progress of convalescence, and that his strength both of body and mind were recruited daily. After the lapse of a fortnight from the adventure of the wood, he one evening addressed me in the following manner:

St. Leon, I have been to blame. I have put you to a sufficient trial; I have received from you every assistance and kindness that my situation demanded, I have imposed on you much trouble and anxiety; I have excited your expectations by announcing to you in part what it was in my power to bestow; and I have finally risked
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the defrauding your hopes and your humanity of their just reward. Do me the justice however to remember, that I had no presentiment of the event which has so inauspiciously come between you and your hopes. Fool that I was, I imagined that I had suffered enough, and that, as I had obtained a longer respite from external persecution than I almost ever experienced, I should be permitted to spend the short remainder of my days uninterrupted! I now however look back upon this last assault with complacency. It has cut off something from the last remnant of a life, to the close of which I look forward with inexpressible longing; at the same time that I am still in prospect of obtaining the final wish of my heart, the stealing out of the world unperceived, and thus in some measure eluding the last malice of my enemies. After my death I have but one injunction to leave with you, the injunction of Hercules to Philoctetes, that no inducement may move you to betray to mortal man the place in which you shall have deposited my ashes. Bury them in a spot which I will describe to you; it is not far, and is only recommended to me by its almost inaccessible situation: and that once done, speak of me, and, if possible, think of me no more. Never on any account mention me or allude to me; never describe me, or relate the manner of our meeting, or the adventure which has at length brought on the desired close of my existence.

Believe me, in the feeble and helpless condition in which I have spent the last fortnight, your wishes and expectations have been uppermost in my mind, and there is nothing I have felt with so much compunction as the danger of leaving them unsatisfied. To you perhaps I at present appear to be rapidly recovering. I feel the dart of death in my vitals; I know I shall not live four days. *It is necessary* therefore that I should finish without delay all that remains for me to finish. I will devote this
night

night to the arranging my thoughts and putting in order what I have to communicate, that no mistake or omission may have part in a transaction so important. Come to me to-morrow morning; I will be prepared for you.

As soon as I had heard this discourse, I provided the stranger with every thing he could want during the night, and withdrew. My heart was big with expectation; my thoughts all night were wild and tumultuous. When the hour of assignation arrived, I hastened along the garden to the summer-house, conscious that upon that hour depended all the colour of my future life. Since the stranger had been in his present dangerous condition, the door was not bolted. It was only locked: the key was in my possession, and remained night and day attached to my person. I opened the door; I panted and was breathless.

I immediately saw that the stranger had undergone some great alteration for the worse. He had suffered a sort of paralytic affection. He lifted up his face as I entered; it was paler than I had ever seen it. He shook his head mournfully, and intimated by signs the disappointment which this morning must witness. He was speechless. Fate, fate! exclaimed I in an agony of despair, am I to be for ever baffled! Is the prize so much longed for and so ardently expected at last to escape me! —It is not to be imagined how much these successive, endless disappointments increased my impatience, and magnified in my eyes the donation I sought.

The whole of this and the following day the stranger remained speechless. The third day in the morning, he murmured many sounds, but in a manner so excessively inarticulate, that I was not able to understand one word in six that he said. I recollected his prediction that he should die on the fourth day. The fever of my soul was at its height. Mortal sinews and fibres could sustain no more. If the stranger had died thus, it is most probable
that

that I should have thrown myself in anguish and rage upon his corpse, and have expired in the same hour.

In the evening of the third day I visited him again. He had thrown his robe around him, and was sitting on the side of his couch. The evening sun shot his last beams over the window-shutters. There were about eight inches between the shutter and the top of the window; and some branches of vines, with their grapes already ripe, broke the uniformity of the light. The side of the couch faced the west, and the beams played upon the old man's countenance. I had never seen it so serene. The light, already softened by the decline of day, gave it a peculiar animation; and a smile that seemed to betoken renovation and the youth of angels, sat upon it. He beckoned me to approach, I placed myself beside him on the couch; he took my hand in his, and leaned his face towards me.

I shall never witness the light of the setting sun again! were the first words he uttered. I immediately perceived that he spoke more collectively and with better articulation, than at any time since the paralytic stroke.—Still however it was no easy matter to develope his words. But I wound up every faculty of my frame to catch them; and, assisted as I was by the habit of listening to his speech for many weeks, which during the whole of that time had never been distinct, I was successful enough to make out his entire discourse.

It continued, though with various interruptions, for more than half an hour. He explained with wonderful accuracy the whole of his secrets, and the process with which they were connected. My soul was roused to the utmost stretch of attention and astonishment. His secrets, as I have already announced in the commencement of this history, consisted of two principal particulars, the art of multiplying gold, and the power of living *for ever*. The detail of these secrets I omit; into that
I am

I am forbidden to enter. My design in writing this narrative, I have said, is not to teach the art of which I am in possession, but to describe the adventures it produced to me.

The more I listened, the more my astonishment grew. I looked at the old man before me ; I observed the wretchedness of his appearance, the meanness of his attire, his apparent old age, his extreme feebleness, the characters of approaching death that were written on his countenance. After what I had just heard, I surveyed these things with a sensation of novelty, as if I had never remarked them in him before. I said to myself, is this the man, that possesses mines of wealth inexhaustible, and the capacity of living forever ?

Observing that he had finished his discourse, I addressed to him these words, by a sort of uncontrollable impulse, and with all the vehemence of unsated and insuppressible curiosity :

Tell me, I adjure you by the living God, what use have you made of these extraordinary gifts, and with what events has that use been attended ?

As I spoke thus, the countenance of the old man underwent a surprising change. Its serenity vanished ;—his eyes rolled with an expression of agony ; and he answered me thus :

Be silent, St. Leon ! How often must I tell you that no single incident of my story shall ever be repeated !—Have I no claim upon your forbearance ? Can you be barbarous and inhuman enough to disturb my last scene with these bitter recollections ? I was silent.

This is all that is material, that passed at our interview.

The stranger died the next day, and was buried according to his instructions.

CHAP. XIV.

FROM the moment of my last interview with the stranger I was another creature. My thoughts incessantly rolled upon his communications. They filled me with astonishment and joy, almost to bursting. I was unable to contain myself; I was unable to remain in any posture or any place. I could scarcely command myself sufficiently to perform the last duties to his body in the manner he had directed. I paced with eager step the sands of the lake; I climbed the neighbouring hills, and then descended with inconceivable rapidity to the vales below; I traced with fierce impatience the endless mazes of the wood in which I so hardly recovered my bewildered guest. The uninterruptedness and celerity of bodily motion seemed to communicate some ease to my swelling heart.

Yet there was one thing I wanted. I wanted some friendly bosom into which to pour out my feelings, and thus by participation to render my transports balsamic and tolerable. But this was ever denied me. No human ear must ever be astonished with the story of my endowments and my privileges. I may whisper it to the woods and the waters, but not in the face of man. Not only am I bound to suppress the knowledge of the important secrets I possess, but even the feelings, the ruminations, the visions, that are for ever floating in my soul. It is but a vain and frivolous distinction upon which I act, when I commit to this paper my history, and not the science which is its corner-stone. The reason why the science may not be divulged, is obvious. Exhaustless wealth, if communicated to all men, would be but an exhaustless heap of pebbles and dust; and nature will not admit her everlasting laws to be so abrogated, *as they would be by rendering the whole race of sublunary man immortal.* But I am bound, as far as possible, not
only

only to hide my secrets, but to conceal that I have any to hide. Senseless paper! be thou at least my confidant! To thee I may impart, what my soul spurns the task to suppress. The human mind insatiably thirsts for a confidant and a friend. It is no matter that these pages shall never be surveyed by other eyes than mine. They afford at least the semblance of communication and the unburthening of the mind; and I will press the illusion fondly and for ever to my heart.

To return to the explanation of my feelings immediately after receiving possession of my grand acquisition; for, without that explanation, the spirit and meaning of my subsequent narrative will scarcely be sufficiently apprehended.

Happy, happy, happy man! exclaimed I in the midst of my wanderings and reveries. Wealth! thy power is unbounded and inconceivable. All men bow down to thee; the most stubborn will is by thee rendered pliant as wax; all obstacles are melted down and dissolved by the ardour of thy beams! The man that possesses thee finds every path level before him, and every creature burning to anticipate his wishes: But if these are the advantages that wealth imparts to such as possess only those scanty portions which states and nations allow to the richest, how enviable must his condition be, whose wealth is literally exhaustless and infinite! He possesses really the blessing, which priestcraft and superstition have lyingly pronounced upon the charitable: he may give away the revenues of princes, and not be the poorer. He possesses the attribute which we are accustomed to ascribe to the creator of the universe: he may say to a man, Be rich, and he is rich. He can bestow with equal facility the smallest gifts and the greatest. Palaces, as if they were the native exhalations of the soil, rise out of the earth at his bidding. He holds the fate of nations and of the world in his hand. He can remove so-

rests, and level mountains, drain marshes, extend canals, turn the course of rivers, and shut up the sea with doors. He can assign to every individual in a nation the task he pleases, can improve agriculture and establish manufactures, can found schools, and hospitals, and infirmaries, and universities. He can study the genius of every man, and enable every man to pursue the bent of his mind. Poets and philosophers will be fostered, the sublimest flights of genius be produced, and the most admirable discoveries effected, under his auspicious patronage. The whole world are his servants; and he, if his temper be noble and upright, will be the servant of the whole world. Nay, it cannot happen otherwise. He has as few temptations to obliquity as omnipotence itself. Weakness and want are the parents of vice. But he possesses every thing; he cannot better his situation; no man can come into rivalry or competition with him. I thank God, I have known the extremes of poverty, and therefore am properly qualified to enjoy my present happiness. I have felt a reverse of fortune, driving me in one instance to insanity; in another instance threatening to destroy me, my wife, and children together, with the plague of hunger. My heart has been racked with never-dying remorse, because, by my guilt and folly, my children have been deprived of the distinction and rank to which they were born, and plunged in remediless obscurity. Heaven has seen my sufferings, and at length has graciously said, It is enough. Because I have endured more than man ever endured from the privation of fortune. God in his justice has reserved for me this secret of the transmutation of metals. I can never again fall into that wretchedness, by which my understanding was subverted, and my heart was broken.

From this part of the legacy of the stranger, my mind *reverted* to the other. I surveyed my limbs, all the joints and articulations of my frame with curiosity and astonishment.

ent. What! exclaimed I, these limbs, this com-
ed, but brittle frame, shall last for ever! No dis-
shall attack it; no pain shall seize it; death shall
old from it for ever his abhorred grasp! Perpetual
, perpetual activity, perpetual youth, shall take up
abode with me! Time shall generate in me no de-
shall not add a wrinkle to my brow, or convert a
f my head to grey! This body was formed to die;
lifice to crumble into dust; the principles of cor-
n and mortality are mixed up in every atom of my
But for me the laws of nature are suspended;
ernal wheels of the universe roll backward; I am
ed to be triumphant over fate and time!
nths, years, cycles, centuries! To me all these are
indivisible moments. I shall never become old;
always be, as it were, in the porch and infancy of
nce; no lapse of years shall subtract any thing from
ure duration. I was born under Louis the Twelfth;
of Francis the First now threatens a speedy termi-
; he will be gathered to his fathers, and Henry his
ll succeed him. But what are princes and kings,
enerations of men to me? I shall become familiar
he rise and fall of empires; in a little while the ve-
ne of France, my country, will perish from the face
earth, and men will dispute about the situation of
as they dispute about the scite of ancient Ninevah
roy. Yet I shall still be young. I shall take my
istant posterity by the hand; I shall accompany
n their career; and, when they are worn out and
sted, shall shut up the tomb over them, and set for-

re was something however in this part of my spe-
m that did not entirely please me. Methought
e of mankind looked too insignificant in my eyes,
a degree of uneasiness at the immeasurable distance
as put between me and the rest of my species. I
found

found myself alone in the world. Must I for ever live without a companion, a friend, any one with whom I can associate upon equal terms, with whom I can have a community of sensations, and feelings, and hopes, and desires, and fears? I experienced something, less than a wish, yet a something very capable of damping my joy, that I also were subject to mortality. I could have been well content to be partaker with a race of immortals, but I was not satisfied to be single in this respect. I was not pleased to recollect how trivial would appear to me those concerns of a few years, about which the passions of men are so eagerly occupied. I did not like the deadness of heart that seemed to threaten me. I began to be afraid of vacancy and torpor, and that my life would become too uniformly quiet. Nor did it sufficiently console me, to recollect that, as one set of friends died off the stage, another race would arise to be substituted in their stead. I felt that human affections and passions are not made of this transferable stuff, and that we can love nothing truly, unless we devote ourselves to it heart and soul, and our life is, as it were bound up in the object of our attachment.

It was worse when I recollected my wife and my children. When I considered for the first time that they were now in a manner nothing to me, I felt a sensation that might be said to mount to anguish. How can a man attach himself to any thing, when he comes to consider it as the mere play-thing and amusement of the moment! In this statement however I am not accurate. Habit is more potent than any theoretical speculation. Past times had attached me deeply, irrevocably to all the members of my family. But I felt that I should survive them all. They would die one by one, and leave me alone. I should drop into their graves the still renewing tear of anguish. In that tomb would my heart be buried. Never, never, through the countless ages of eternity, should I form another attachment. In the happy
age

age of delusion, happy and auspicious at least to the cultivation of the passions, when I felt that I also was a mortal, I was capable of a community of sentiments and a going forth of the heart. But how could I, an immortal, hope ever hereafter to feel a serious, an elevating and expansive passion for the ephemeron of an hour!

As the first tumult of my thoughts subsided, I began, as is usual with persons whose minds are turned loose in the search of visionary happiness, to picture to myself, more steadily and with greater minuteness, the objects I would resolve early to accomplish. I would in the first place return to France, my adored country, the residence of my ancestors, whose annals they had adorned, whose plains had witnessed their heroic feats, and whose earth inclosed their ashes. To France I was endeared by every tie that binds the human heart; her language had been the prattle of my infancy; her national manners and temper were twined with the fibres of my constitution, and could not be rooted out; I felt that every Frenchman that lived was my brother. Banishment had only caused these prejudices to strike their tendrils deeper in my heart. I knew not that I should finally limit my abode to France. A man who, like Melchisedec, is "without end of life," may well consider himself as being also like him "without father, without mother, and without descent." But, at all events, I would first fix my children, who did not participate in my privileges, in their native soil. I would reside there myself, at least till they were fully disposed of, and till the admirable partner of the last seventeen years of my life had resigned her breath. I would immediately repurchase the property of my ancestors, which had been so distressfully resigned. The exile should return from his seven years banishment in triumph and splendour. I would return to the court of my old patron and friend, the gallant Francis, and present to him my boy, the future representative

sentative of my family, now one year older than I had been at the field of the Cloth of Gold. Though an exile from my country, I had not been an inattentive witness of her fortunes. The year fifteen hundred and forty-four was a remarkable and interesting year in the history of France. The endless animosities of Francis and the emperor had broken out with new fury about two years before. In the spring of the present year, the count d'Anguien had won a battle in Piedmont*, in which ten thousand Imperialists were left dead upon the field, and which might be considered as having at length effaced the defeat of Pavia, in the same part of the world nineteen years before. The moment it had been announced that a battle was resolved on, the young nobility of France, with their characteristic ardour, had hurried to the scene, and the court of Paris was, in an instant as it were, turned into a desert. On the other hand the emperor and the king of England had concerted for the same season a formidable plan of attack against our northern frontier. With an army of twenty-five thousand respectively, the one on the side of Champagne, and the other of Picardy, they agreed to advance directly into the heart of the kingdom, and to unite their forces in the neighbourhood of Paris. The last intelligence that had reached me was, that Chateau Thierry, about twenty leagues from the metropolis, was in the hands of the emperor, and that the inhabitants of the capital, filled with consternation, were seeking their safety by flight in every direction. These circumstances had passed idly by me, and left little impression, so long as I considered myself as an obscure peasant, cut off for ever from the bosom of my country. But, vested with the extraordinary powers now intrusted to me, the case was altered. I felt even a greater interest

* The battle of Cerisolles.

in my sovereign, now pressed down with disease and calamity, yet retaining the original alacrity and confidence of his soul, than I had done, when I saw him in all the pride of youth, and all the splendour of prosperity. I was anxious that Charles should now enter into his service; and I determined once again to assume the cuirass and the faulchion, that I might be the instructor of his youth, and his pattern in feats of war. I resolved that my shepherd-boy, bred in obscurity among woods and mountains, should burst with sudden splendour upon his countrymen, and prove in the field his noble blood and generous strain. I also proposed to myself, both out of sympathy for my king, and to give greater éclat to my son's entrance into life, to replenish with my treasures the empty coffers of France, and thus to furnish what at this period seemed to be the main-spring upon which the fortune of war depended. With the advantages I could afford him, the career of Charles could not fail to be rapid and illustrious, and he would undoubtedly obtain the staff of constable of France, the possessor of which, Montmorency, was now in disgrace. I would marry my daughters to such of the young nobility, as I should find most distinguished in talents, and spotless in character. When, by the death of her I most loved, my affections should be weaned from my country, and the scenes to which I had been accustomed were rendered painful and distressing, I would then set out upon my travels. I would travel with such splendour and profusion of expense (for this, though mortified in me by a reverse of many years duration, continued to be the foible of my heart) as should supercede the necessity of letters of recommendation, and secure me a favourable reception wherever I appeared. I might spend a life, in a manner, in every country that was fortunate enough to allure my stay, spreading improvements, dispensing blessings, and causing all distress and calamity to vanish from before me.

CHAR.

CHAP. XV.

MY mind was occupied in these and similar reveries for several weeks after the death of the stranger. My wife and children had hoped, after that event, that I should have returned to the habits which had pervaded the last six years of my existence, and which they had felt so eminently productive of gratification and delight. In this hope they found themselves deceived. My domestic character was, for the present, at least, wholly destroyed. I had a subject of contemplation that did not admit of a partaker, and from this subject I could not withdraw my thoughts, so much as for an instant. I had no pleasure but in that retirement, where I could be unseen and unheard by any human eye or ear. If at any time I was compelled to join the domestic circle, I dispatched the occasion that brought me there as speedily as possible; and even while I remained in it, was silent and absent, engrossed with my own contemplations, and heedless and unobservant of every thing around me.

My abstraction was not however so entire as to prevent me from sometimes stealing, in a sort of momentary interregnum of thought, in that pause where the mind rests upon the chain already passed over, and seems passively to wait for the sequel, a glance at my family. I looked at them without knowing what it was that I did, and without the intention to notice what I saw. Yet, even in this state of mental abstraction, visible objects will sometimes succeed in making their impression. I perceived that my wife and children suffered from my behaviour. I remarked a general air of disconsolateness, and a mild unexpostulating submission to what nevertheless the heart deeply deplored. They did not presume to interrupt me; they did not by prying and inquisitive speeches attempt to extort from me the secret of the alteration

teration they saw; but it was manifest they conceived some great and radical calamity had poisoned the heart of our domestic joy.

It was these symptoms thus remarked by me, that first roused me from the inebriation of my new condition. I was compelled to suspect that, while I revelled in visions of future enjoyment, I was inflicting severe and unmerited pains on those I loved. It was necessary, if I valued their happiness, that I should descend from the clouds of speculation and fancy, and enter upon the world of realities.

But here I first found a difficulty to which, during the reign of my intoxication, I had been utterly insensible. I was rich; I could raise my family, as far as the power of money extended, money which may in some sense be styled the empress of the world, to what heights I pleased. I had hitherto committed the fault, so common to projectors, of looking only to ultimate objects and great resting-places, and neglecting to consider the steps between. This was an omission of high importance. Every thing in the world is conducted by gradual process. This seems to be the great principle of harmony in the universe. Nothing is abrupt; one thing is so blended and softened into another, that it is impossible to say where the former ends and the latter begins.

This remark is fully applicable to the situation which was now before me. Yesterday I was poor; to-day I was possessor of treasures inexhaustible. How was the alteration to be announced? To dissipate the revenues of princes, to purchase immense estates, to launch into costly establishments, are tasks to which the most vulgar mind is equal. But no man stands alone in the world, without all trace of what he has been, and with no one near that thinks himself entitled to scrutinise his proceedings and his condition. Least of all was this my case. I was bound to certain other persons by the most sacred obligations:

obligations; I could not separate myself from them; I could not render myself a mere enigma in their eyes; though, in the language of the world, the head of my family, they were my natural censors and judges. I was accountable to them for my conduct; it was my duty, paramount to all other duties, to stand as a fair, upright and honourable character in their estimation.

If these remarks be true taken in a general view, they are much more so, when applied to my particular case. There are men who live in the midst of their families, like an eastern despot surrounded with his subjects. They are something too sacred to be approached; their conduct is not to be reasoned upon; the amount of their receipts and disbursements is not to be inspected; their resources are unknown; no one must say to them, What dost thou? or, why hast thou thus conducted thyself? Even these persons will not escape the tax to which all men are liable. They cannot kill the general spirit of enquiry; the mystery in which they wrap themselves will often serve as an additional stimulus; they will finally encounter the judgment and verdict of all. For myself, I had lived in the midst of my family upon a system of paternal and amicable commerce. I had suffered too deeply from a momentary season of separation and mystery, not to have been induced to renounce it decisively and for ever.

Firm however as I had imagined my renunciation to have been, I was now thrown back upon what I had most avoided. I had a secret source of advantage, the effects of which were to be participated by those I loved, while the spring was to remain for ever unknown. What I most sought upon this occasion, was, that my family should share my good fortune, and at the same time be prevented from so much as suspecting that there was any thing mysterious connected with it. To effect this, I presently conceived that it would be necessary, to sacrifice the sudden and instantaneous prosperity I had proposed to myself,

myself, and introduce the reverse of our condition by slow and, as far as possible, insensible degrees.

One thing on which I determined, preparatory to the other measures I had in view, was to remove from my present habitation, and take up my residence for a time in the city of Constance. In the cottage of the mountains it was impossible to make any material alteration in my establishment. My property was of the narrowest extent; nor would it be easily practicable in a country, the inhabitants of which were accustomed to a humble allotment, considerably to enlarge it. My house was frugal, if not mean; and, unless it were first pulled down and built over again, the idea of introducing servants, equipage or splendour into it, would be absurd. My design was not to make a long abode where I now was; but, as soon as my family should be sufficiently prepared for the transition, to return to my native country. I believed in the mean time that, in the capital of the bishopric, where my name was scarcely remembered by a single individual, I should be more at liberty to proceed in circumstances suggested, than in my present rural situation, where every neighbour regarded himself as vested with a sort of inquisitorial power over all around him.

To account for this measure to my family, I felt it incumbent on me to confess to them a certain pecuniary acquisition. The story that most readily suggested itself, was that of the stranger having left behind him a certain sum of which he made a donation to me. This, though in the plain and direct sense of the terms it were false, in its spirit bore a certain resemblance to the truth; with that resemblance, in spite of the rigid adherence to veracity, that first ornament of a gentleman, most essential pre-requisite to the regard and affection of others, which I had hitherto maintained, I was obliged to content myself. What could I do? I was obliged to account for appearances; I was forbidden by the

the most solemn injunctions to unfold the truth. I should indeed have felt little complacence in the disclosure; I should have been reluctant to announce a circumstance, which, as I began to feel, introduced a permanent difference and separation between me and my family.

The sum, at which I fixed the legacy of the stranger was three thousand crowns. I was not inattentive to the future; I should have been glad, by my present account, to have furnished a more ample solution for circumstances which might occur hereafter. But some regard was due to probability. An unknown, a solitary man, broken with age, who arrived on foot, and who declined all aid and attendance, must not be represented as possessing mines of treasure.

It was some time before I could prevail on myself to break my story to the inhabitants of my cottage. As the time approached when I was to bid an everlasting farewell to rural obscurity and a humble station, they seemed to adorn themselves in new charms. I was like the son of a king, who had hitherto been told by his attendants that he was a mere villager, and who, while his youthful imagination is dazzled by the splendour that awaits him, yet looks back with a wistful eye upon his mirthful sports, his former companions, and the simple charms of her who first obtained his guileless love. I announced my acquisition and my purpose with a faltering tongue and a beating heart.

I could perceive that my tale produced few emotions of pleasure in those who heard it. Julia and her mother especially were warmly attached to their retirement, and the scenes which had witnessed so many pleasurable incidents and emotions. Chagrin, in spite of themselves, made a transient abode upon their countenances; but the unresisting mildness of the one, and the considerate attachment of the other, prevented for the present their sensations from breaking out into words. The feelings
however

however that they consigned to silence, did not entirely escape the notice of the lively little Marguerite. She sympathised with them, probably without being aware that they were sad. She came towards me, and, with much anxiety in her enquiring face, asked why we must go away from the cottage? If I had got some money, I might go to the town, and buy sweetmeats, and ribbands, and new clothes, and a hundred more pretty things, and bring them home. For her part, she should be better pleased to put on her finery and make her feast in the pretty old summer-house, now she was again permitted to go and play in it, than in a palace all stuck over with emeralds and rubies. Her mother wiped away a tear at the innocent speech of her darling, kissed her, and bid her go and feed the hen and her chickens. Charles was the only one in whom I could observe any pleasure at my intelligence. He was not as yet skilful enough to calculate the advantages that three thousand crowns could purchase. But I could see joy sparkle in his eyes, as I announced my intention of bidding adieu to retirement, and taking up my rest in the capital of the district. His veins swelled with the blood of his ancestors; his mind was inured to the contemplation of their prowess. Already sixteen years of age, he had secretly burned to go forth into the world, to behold the manners of his species, and to establish for himself a claim to some rank in their estimation. He had pined in thought at the mediocrity of our circumstances, and the apparent impossibility of emerging; for he regarded the duty of contributing his labour to the subsistence of the family, as the first of all obligations, and the more the bent of his spirit struggled against it, the more resolutely he set himself to comply.

The rest of the family were no sooner retired, than Marguerite, finding in what I had just announced to all an occasion from the use of, which she could not excuse herself.

herself, took this opportunity of unburthening the grief which had long been accumulating in her mind.

St. Leon, said she, listen kindly to what I am going to say to you, and assure yourself that I am actuated by no spleen, resentment or ill-humour, but by the truest affection. I perceive I have lost, in your apprehension, the right of advising you. I am no longer the partner of your counsels; I am no longer the confidant of your thoughts. You communicate nothing but what you cannot suppress, and that you communicate to your whole family assembled. Heaven knows how dear to me is every individual of that family! But my love for them does not hide from me what is due to myself. I know that a husband, who felt as a husband ought, and, give me leave to say, as I have deserved you should feel towards me, could not act as you have acted to-night.

You must excuse my reminding you of some things which you seem to have forgotten. I would not mention them if they had not been forgotten when they ought to have been remembered. I have lived seventeen years with you; my whole study has been your advantage and pleasure. Have you any thing to reproach me with? Point out to me, if in any thing I could have added to your pleasure, and have neglected it! What I have done, has not been the ceremonious discharge of a duty; it has been the pure emanation of an attachment that knew no bounds. I have passed with you through good fortune and ill fortune. When we were rich, I entered with my whole heart into your pleasures, because they were yours. When we were poor, I endured every hardship without a murmur; I watched by you, I consoled you, I reconciled you to yourself. I do not mean to make a merit of all this: no, Reginald! I could not have acted otherwise if I would.

Do me the justice to recollect that I have not been a complaining or irritable companion. In all our adversities,

ties, in the loss of fortune and the bitter consequences of that loss, I never uttered a reproachful word. What poverty, sorrow, hunger and famine never extorted from me, you have at length wrung from my bleeding heart. St. Leon! I have known your bosom thoughts. In no former instance has your affection or your confidence been alienated from me, and they consoled me for all the rest. But now, for three months the case has been entirely altered. You have during all that time been busy, pensive and agitated; but I have been as much a stranger to your meditations as if I had never been accustomed to be their depository. You have not scrupled to inflict a wound upon me that no subsequent change will ever be able to cicatrise. Nor indeed do I see any likelihood of a change. You announce our removal to Constance; what we are to do next, with what views, or for what purpose, I am ignorant.

I have made my election. My heart is formed for affection, and must always feel an uneasy void and desolation without it. If you had thus robbed me of your attachment in an early period of our intercourse, I know not upon what extremity my disappointment and anguish might have driven me. They are harder to bear now; but, I submit. It is too late either for relief or remedy. What remains of my powers and my strength I owe to my children. I will not seduce them from their father. They may be benefited by his purse or his understanding, though, like me, they should be deprived of his affection. You may be their friend when I am no more. I feel that this will not last long. I feel that the main link that bound me to existence cannot be snapped, and thus snapped by unkindness worse than death, without promising soon to put a period to my miseries. I shall be your victim in death, after having devoted my life to you, in
a way

a way in which few women were ever devoted to their husbands.

But this is not what I purposed chiefly to say. This is what my situation and my feelings have unwillingly wrung from me. Though you have injured me in the tenderest point, I still recollect what you were to me. I still feel deeply interested in your welfare, and the fair fame you are to transmit to your children. I intreat you then to reflect deeply, before you proceed further. You seem to me to stand upon a precipice; nor do the alteration that has taken place in your manners, and the revolution of your heart, lead me to augur favourably of the plans you have formed. What is this stranger? Whence came he? Why did he hide himself, and why was he pursued by the officers of justice? Had he no relations? Was his bequest of the sum he had about him his own act, and who is the witness to its deliberateness or its freedom? You must not think that the world is inattentive to the actions of men or their circumstances; if it were, the fame we prize would be an empty bauble. No, sir, a fair fame can only be secured by unequivocal proceedings. What will, what can be thought of your giving shelter to an unknown, a man accused of crimes, a man never beheld even by an individual of your own family, and, upon the strength of whose alleged bequest, you are about to change the whole mode of your life.

Nor, Reginald, must you think me credulous enough to imagine that you have now disclosed the whole or the precise truth. Three thousand crowns is not a sum sufficient to account for what you propose, for the long agitation of your thoughts, or for the change of character you have sustained. You must either be totally deprived of rational judgment, or there must be something behind, that you have not communicated. What do you purpose in going to reside in the midst of a city, foreign to the manners of a Frenchman, distracted with internal
broils,

broils, and embittered to us by the recollection of the extremities we personally suffered in it? Is your ambition sunk so low, that it can be gratified by such a transition? No; you mean more than you have announced; you mean something you are unwilling to declare. Consider that meaning well! Put me out of the question! I am nothing, and no longer desire to be any thing. But do not involve yourself in indelible disgrace, or entail upon your memory the curses of your children!

What a distress was mine, who, in return to so generous and noble an expostulation, could impart no confidence, and indulge no sincerity! I felt a misery, of which, till this hour, I had been unable to form a conception. Fool that I was, I had imagined that, when endowed with the bequests of the stranger, no further evil could approach me! I had, in my visionary mood, created castles and palaces, and expatiated in the most distant futurity! and here I was, stopped and disappointed at the threshold, in the very first step of my proceedings! What I could however, I did; I poured forth to Marguerite, not the secrets of my understanding, but the overpowering emotions of my soul.

Best, most adorable of women! cried I, how you rend my heart with the nobleness of your remonstrances! Never was man blessed with a partner so accomplished and exemplary as I have been! Do you think your merits can ever be obliterated from my memory? Do you think the feelings of gratitude and admiration can ever be weakened in my bosom, or that the strength and singleness of my attachment can suffer decay? Bear me witness, heaven! I know no creature on the face of the earth that can enter into competition with you; there is not the thing in nature that I prize in comparison. I love you a thousand times better than myself, and would die with joy to purchase your ease and satisfaction. I

can never repay the benefits you have conferred on me ; I can never rise to an equality with you.

What anguish then do you inflict upon me, when you talk of becoming the victim of my unkindness? Believe you I can endure, after having dissipated your patrimony and drawn you with me into exile, after having experienced from you a tenderness such as man never in any other instance obtained from woman, to entertain the idea of embittering the remainder of your life, and shortening your existence? I should regard myself as the most execrable of monsters. I could not live under the recollection of so unheard of a guilt. If you would not have me abhor myself and curse existence, live, confide in me, and be happy!

Oh, Marguerite! how wretched and pitiable is my situation! Make some allowance for me! I have a secret, that I would give worlds to utter, but dare not. Do not imagine that there is, or can be any decay in my affection! Confide in me! Allow to necessity, what never, never could be the result of choice! In all things else, you shall know my inmost heart, as you possess the boundless and unalterable affection of my soul!

Marguerite was somewhat, but not wholly, soothed by the earnestness of my protestations. She saw, for the prescience of the heart is never deceived, that a blow was given to the entireness of our affection, from which it would never recover. She felt, for in truth and delicacy of sentiment she was much my superior, that the reserve, in which I persisted, and for which I deprecated excuse, might be sufficiently consistent with a vulgar attachment, but would totally change the nature of ours. She was aware that it related to no ordinary point, that it formed the pole-star of my conduct, that it must present itself afresh from day to day, and that in its operation it amounted to a divorce of the heart. She submitted *however*, and endeavoured to appear cheerful. Though
she

she felt the worm of sorrow gnawing her vitals, she was unwilling to occasion me an uneasiness it was in her power to withhold. She was struck with the consistency and determination of my resistance, and expostulated no more.

We went to Constance. We bade adieu to the scene of a six years' happiness, such as the earth has seldom witnessed. I alone had occasioned some imperfection in that happiness. There were times indeed when, sitting in affectionate communion with my wife, and surrounded by my children, my sensations had been as delicious as the state of human existence ever had to boast. I felt my heart expand; I was conscious to the unreserved union that subsisted among us; I felt myself identified with all that I loved, and all for whom my heart was anxious. But the curse entailed upon me from the earliest period to which my memory can reach, operated even in the cottage of the lake. I was not formed to enjoy a scene of pastoral simplicity. Ambition still haunted me; an uneasiness, scarcely defined in its object, from time to time recurred to my mind. If I thought I wanted nothing for myself, I deemed a career of honour due to my children. Again, when I regarded honour as an empty phantom, and persuaded myself that all conditions of life were intrinsically equal, I recollected the fearful scene where hunger and destruction had hung over us in Constance, and in imagination often pictured to myself that scene as on the point of being renewed. The sword of the demon famine seemed to my disturbed apprehension to be suspended over us by a hair. Such had been the draught of bitterness that occasionally detracted from this most enviable, as in retrospect I am willing to denominate it, period of my existence.

We quitted our rural retreat, and took up our abode in a prosperous mercantile city. I hired commodious apartments in one of the grand squares, not far from the spot.

spot where the fairs are usually held. Undoubtedly there was nothing in this residence very congenial to the bent of my disposition, or the projects that fermented in my mind. I had merely chosen it by way of interval, and to soften the transition from what I had been, to what I purposed to be. In the multitude of irresolute thoughts with which I laboured, the small distance of Constance from the cottage of the lake, made me feel as if the removal thither was one of the gentlest and most moderate measures to which I could have recourse.

I had never been less happy and at peace with myself than I was now. From general society and the ordinary intercourse of acquaintance I had long been estranged, and it was in vain that I endeavoured to return to habits of that sort. The society which the city of Constance afforded had few charms for me. It had no pretensions to the politeness, the elegance, the learning or the genius, an intercourse with which had once been familiar to me. It scarcely contained within its walls any but such as were occupied in merchandise or manufacture. The attention of its inhabitants were divided between these objects, and the encroachments which were making upon the ancient religion by the Confession of Augsburg and the dogmas of Calvin. The majority of the inhabitants were Protestants; and, a few years before, they had expelled their bishop and the canons of their cathedral. Having however miscarried in a religious war into which they had entered, these dignitaries had been reinstalled in their functions and emoluments. The situation thus produced was an unnatural one; and a storm was evidently brewing more violent than any which the city had yet sustained. The gloomy temper and melancholy austerity of the reformers were as little congenial to my temper, as the sordid ignorance and selfishness of the trading spirit of the community.

I therefore

I therefore lived in a state of seclusion. I endeavoured to seek amusement in such novelties and occupations as might present themselves to a person disengaged from the general vortex. But, if the distinguished sphere in which I had once moved disqualified me for taking an interest in these puerilities, the anticipations in which I indulged of the future disqualified me still more. My domestic scene too no longer afforded me the consolation and relief I had been accustomed to derive from it. Marguerite exerted herself to appear cheerful and contented; but it was an exertion. I began to fear that the arrow of disappointment had indeed struck her to the heart. I was anxiously occupied in considering what I was to do next. I hoped that our next step might operate to revive her gaiety, and by additional splendour amuse her solicitude. I began to fear that I had taken a wrong method, and entered the career of a better fortune with too much caution and timidity. At all events I felt that we no longer lived together as we had done. There was no more opening of the heart between us, no more infantine guilelessness and sincerity, no more of that unapprehensive exposure of every thought of the soul, that adds the purest zest to the pleasures of domestic life. We stood in awe of each other; each was to the other in some degree an intrusive and unwelcome spy upon what was secretly passing in the mind. There may be persons who regard this as an evil very capable of being endured; but they must be such as never knew the domestic joys I once experienced. The fall from one of these conditions of life to the other was too bitter.

CHAP. XVI.

ANXIOUS to divert my thoughts from what I hoped was only a temporary evil, I determined, accompanied by Charles, to make a tour of some of the cities of Germany. Dresden was the capital to which I was most desirous of conducting him. Maurice, duke of Saxony, who held his court there, and who was now only twenty-three years of age, was incomparably the most accomplished prince of the empire. Desirous as I was that my only son should fill a distinguished career, I thought I could not better prepare him for the theatre of his native country, than by thus initiating him beforehand in scenes of distinction and greatness.

He was delighted with his tour. We had not proceeded many leagues from Constance, before, indulging the bent of my mind, I laid aside the humbleness of our appearance, and the obscure style in which we travelled; and having procured a numerous cavalcade of horses and servants, I set forward with considerable magnificence. We passed through Munich, Ratisbon and Prague. At Munich we found the court of the elector Palatine; the diet of the empire was sitting at Ratisbon, when we arrived at that city. Charles had been almost entirely a stranger to every thing princely and magnificent from the time he was nine years of age; and he was now exactly at that period of human life, when external appearances are apt to make the strongest impression. To him every thing that occurred seemed like a transportation into a new world. The figure we made procured us, as strangers, unquestioned admission into every circle. We mixed with princes, ourselves, in garb and figure, confounded with those we saw. I had lived too much and too long in the most splendid society, to find difficulty in resuming the unembarrassed and courtly manners which I had for years laid aside; and Charles might be

said

said to see his father in a new character. Novelty prompted his admiration; he was intoxicated with wonder. His disposition had always led him to bold and adventurous conceptions; nothing less than an imperious sense of duty could have restrained him from quitting our cottage, and casting himself upon the world in search of honour and distinction. His generous heart had beat to burst away from the obscurity of his station; and it was with impatience and discontent that he looked forward to the life of a swain. Yet he knew not how to break through the obstacles that confined him. It was therefore with transports of pleasure that he saw them vanishing as of themselves, and the career of glory opening, as if by enchantment, to his eager steps.

The court of Dresden was infinitely more delightful to him than the court of Munich, or the imperial display at Ratisbon. Here Charles saw a young prince in the flower of his age, whose talents and spirit rendered him the universal object of attention and adoration. He remarked, in the fire of his eyes, the vivacity of his gestures, and the grandeur of his port, something inexpressibly different from those princes, of whom it is necessary that their rank should be announced to you by some extrinsic circumstance, that you may not mistake them for a merchant's clerk or a city-magistrate. The sentiment that he breathed as it were instinctively, as we returned from the first time of our seeing duke Maurice, was, At twenty-three years of age may I, in appearance, accomplishments and spirit, resemble this man!

Here I was desirous of making a longer stay than at the cities through which we had previously passed, and of procuring for my son some personal intercourse with this great ornament of the age. I judged this to be the more easy, as, in our first visit to the palace, I had perceived some French noblemen of the Protestant persuasion, who had resorted to the duke's court in search of employment.

ment. They appeared not to know me, but that was little to be wondered at, considering that I had been seven years absent from my country, and that the calamities by which I had been overtaken more than once during that period, might be supposed to have produced a greater effect upon me than the mere lapse of years would have done. Among the rest I remarked Gasper de Coligny, who was only twenty-one years of age at the time I quitted France, and had then been remarked as one of the most promising young men his country had to boast. His stay here was expected to be short; his hopes in his own country, from the greatness of his connections, were of the highest class; and he had only come to Dresden at the earnest invitation of duke Maurice, who entertained an ardent affection for him. My heart led me towards him; policy concurred in dictating the application, as, if I were fortunate enough to gain his favour, my son could not have a friend better qualified, either to form his character, or forward his advancement.

I wrote to Coligny to announce my request to him, and, in a few hours after the delivery of my letter, that young nobleman came in person to wait on me. He informed me that he had done so, because he had something of delicacy to mention, which he did not choose to trust to the intermission of a third person, and upon which, as he hoped I could remove his scruple, he did not like even to bestow the formality of putting it on paper.

I am a gentleman of France, said Coligny; you will excuse my frankness. I am a gentleman of France; you will not wonder at the niceness of my honour. Mixing in society, I do not pretend minutely to investigate the character of every person with whom I converse; but what you ask of me obliges me to consult my understanding, and enquire into facts. I cannot consent to vouch for any man's character to another, till I have paid

paid some attention to the ground upon which that character rests.

I remember the count de St. Leon with pleasure and advantage at the court of my own sovereign. Every one admired his accomplishments, his gallantry and his learning; every one spoke of him with respect. Unfortunate circumstances, as we all understood, deprived you of your patrimony; that is nothing to me; I respect a nobleman in misfortune, as much as when he is surrounded with wealth and splendour. You retired into voluntary exile; I heard, with great grief, of some subsequent calamities that have overtaken you. But, here in Saxony, I see you resuming all your former splendour, and coming forward with the magnificence of a prince. Other of your countrymen have remarked it, as well as myself, and feel themselves at a loss to account for what they see.

Excuse me, count! by your application to me, you oblige me to speak freely. I dare say, you can clear up the difficulty, and account for this second revolution in your fortune, upon which I shall then be the first to congratulate you. I cannot suspect a man with your high descent and the illustrious character you formerly maintained, of any thing dishonourable. But you have not sufficiently considered the account we all owe to one another, and the clearness of proceeding we are obliged to maintain, not only to our own hearts, but in the face of the world. The present occasion is, I trust, fortunate for you; and, when you have assisted me in complying with the rules by which every honourable man governs himself, I shall be eager to publish your justification, and render you all the service in my power.

I was ready to burst with astonishment and vexation, luring this representation of Coligny. I could feel my colour change from pale to red, and from red to pale. I could only answer with suffocation and inward rage, that

I was much obliged to him; I would consider what he said; I would acquaint him with my justification; and, whenever it was made, he might be assured it should be an ample one.—I was cautious as to what I uttered; I could not immediately foresee what it was eligible, or what it was possible, to do; and I was resolved that I would not, by an idle or hasty expression, preclude myself, in a matter of so much moment, from the benefits of future deliberation. If what I had just heard had come from any other person, I should probably have despised it; but I felt at once that Gaspar de Coligny might be considered, in a case of this sort, as the representative of all that was most honourable and illustrious in my native country.—Finding that I was indisposed to any further communication on the subject, he took a polite leave, and departed.

I was no sooner alone, than I felt myself overwhelmed with mortification and shame. I had rejoiced in the bequests of the stranger, because I regarded them as the means of restoring me to splendour, and replacing my children in the situation to which they were entitled by their birth. Was that which I had regarded as the instrument of their glory, to become the medium of their ignominy and disgrace? I had suffered all other misfortunes, but the whisper of dishonour had never been breathed against me. I was a son of honour, descended of a race of heroes, and cradled in the lap of glory and fame. When we quitted Paris in the year 1537, my incomparable wife had set to sale our entire property, resolved that, though driven into exile, we would not leave it in the power of the meanest individual to controvert the sacred attention we yielded to every just obligation. Since that time I had declined from the splendour of rank to the humble situation of a rustic, cultivating my little property with my own hands; nay, I had even, for a short time, hired myself as a labourer in the garden

of

of the bishop of Constance. But the same disdain of every thing disgraceful had followed me to my cottage and truckle bed, which I had originally learned in the halls of chivalry and the castle of my ancestors. Accordingly I had uniformly retained the same honourable character and spotless fame. St. Leon, the virtuous cottager, had in nothing blemished the name of St. Leon, surrounded with glory in the siege of Pavia. Often, and with pride, had I pointed out this circumstance to my son, adding, Whenever fortune calls you, for whatever scenes you may be reserved, remember that your father was unfortunate, but that through life he never acted a deed nor conceived a thought, that should stain your manly cheeks, with the blush of shame! I stand before you a culprit, as having robbed you of your patrimony, but I have preserved for you entire the inheritance of our honour!

This had been the first lesson imprinted upon my infant mind. All other possessions I had ever held cheap and worthless in comparison with that of an illustrious name. My indignation at the attack it now sustained was boundless. The more I thought, the more intolerable it appeared. I was impatient and furious, like a lion struggling in the toils. I could with joy have trampled under my feet whoever aspersed me. I could have wanted in blood, and defied my adversaries to mortal combat. Alas, all my fury was useless here! It was no tale whispered in the dark that I had to contend with; it was the commentary of the world upon incontestable facts. Though a hecatomb of souls should be sacrificed at the shrine of my blasted name, the facts would still remain, the mystery still require to be solved. Coligny, the virtuous Coligny, had made no observations on the circumstances he mentioned; he merely proposed a difficulty, and waited my answer.

I was called upon to exercise the whole of my deliberate powers, as to the reply which was to be returned, or
the

the conduct to be held, upon the question of Coligny. Every thing I most valued was now at issue; and a false step taken under the present circumstances could never be retrieved. I had another sort of party to deal with here, than when I had told Marguerite the tale of the stranger and his legacy. Nothing would pass now, but what bore an open, fair and unequivocal appearance. I must vent no assertion that could not bear to be sifted to the bottom, and that did not fully accord with all the vouchers with which it could be collated. I had written to Marguerite, immediately after launching into the expense with which our tour had been attended, that I had received an unexpected acquisition from the death of a relation of my own family in France. I knew that the story of the three thousand crowns would no longer account for the style in which I was proceeding, and this fabrication suggested itself upon the spur of the moment. I hated to think of the difficulties in the way of explanation in which I was involved; I abhorred the system of falshood I was driven to practise. It did not occur to me at the time, infatuated as I was! that I should have occasion to account for this accession of wealth to any one out of my own family. Marguerite, I well knew, had no correspondence in France, nor therefore any obvious means of verifying or refuting this second deception. But such a story could not be told to noblemen of France, without being instantly liable to be compared with known facts, and eventually investigated upon the spot where the scene was laid. Marguerite herself, I well knew, had listened with incredulity to the explanation I had made, and the alleged legacy of the stranger; what could I expect from indifferent hearers? They might not all possess her good sense and sagacity of judging; but they were destitute of that personal kindness and partiality, which were calculated to induce her to credit whatever I affirmed. Most men have a malignant pleasure
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in the detection of specious pretences, in humbling the importunate superiority that obscures their claims, and removing the rival who might otherwise acquire the prize of which they are in pursuit.

My mind was still torn and distracted with these contemplations, when, in the afternoon of the same day on which I had received in the visit of Coligny, my attention was suddenly roused by the abrupt entrance of my son into the chamber where I was sitting. He opened the door with a hurried action as he entered, and, having closed it impetuously after him, advanced directly towards me. He then stopped himself; and, turning from me, I could perceive a rush of crimson in his face like that of a man suffocated. A passion of tears succeeded that shook his frame, and sufficiently proved that his feelings had sustained some extraordinary shock. My whole soul was alarmed at what I saw; and, following him as he retired to the other side of the room, in the gentlest accents I endeavoured to soothe him, while I enquired with earnestness and trepidation into the cause of his grief.

CHAP. XVII.

HE repelled me. Sit down, sir, sit down! Do not follow me, I beg of you; but sit down!

His manner was earnest and emphatical. Mechanically and without knowing what I did, I obeyed his direction. He came towards me.

I have no time, added he, for qualifying and form. Tell me! am I the son of a man of honour, or a villain?

He saw I was shocked at the unexpected rudeness of his question.

Forgive me, my father! I have always been affectionate and dutiful; I have ever looked up to you as my
model

model and my oracle. But I have been insulted! It never was one of your lessons to teach me to bear an insult!

Is it, replied I, with the sternness that the character of a father will seldom fail to inspire under such circumstances, because you have been insulted, that you think yourself authorised to come home and insult him to whom you owe nothing but respect and reverence?

Stop, sir! Before you claim my reverence, you must show your title to it, and wipe off the aspersions under which you at present labour.

Insolent, presumptuous boy! Know that I am not, by you to be instructed in my duty, and will not answer so rude a questioner! The down as yet scarcely shades your school-boy's cheek; and have you so forgotten the decencies of life as to scoff your father?—His eye brightened as I spoke.

You are right, sir! It gives me pleasure to see your blood rise in return to my passion. Your accent is the accent of innocence. But, indeed! the more innocent and noble you shall prove yourself, the more readily will you forgive my indignation.

I cannot tell. My temper does not fit me to bear the rudeness of a son. Nor do I think that such behaviour as this can be any credit to you, whatever may have been the provocation. Tell me however what is the insult that has thus deeply shaken you?

I went this afternoon to the tennis-court near the river, and played several games with the young count Luitmann. While we were playing, came in the chevalier Dupont, my countryman. The insolence of his nature is a subject of general remark; and he has, though I know not for what reason, conceived a particular animosity to me. A trifling dispute arose between us. We gradually warmed. He threatened to turn me out of the court; I resented the insult; and he passionately answered that the son of an adventurer and a sharper had

no business there; and he would take care I should never be admitted again. I attempted to strike him, but was prevented; and presently learned that the sudden and unexplained way in which we have emerged from poverty, was the ground of his aspersion. As I gained time, and reflected more distinctly upon what was alleged, I felt that personal violence could never remove an accusation of this sort. I saw too, though, intoxicated as I had idly been, with the unwonted splendour to which I was introduced, I had not adverted to it at the time, that the case was of a nature that required explanation. I had been accustomed to reverence and an implicit faith in the wisdom and rectitude of my parents, and therefore encountered in silent submission the revolution of our fortune. But this neutrality will suffice no longer.

To you, sir, I resort for explanation. Send me back to the insolent youth and his companions, with a plain and unanswerable tale, that may put to silence for ever these brutal scoffs and reproaches. Let it be seen this night which of the two has most fully merited to be thrust out of honourable society. I trust, I have not so demeaned myself, but that our mutual companions will join to compel this unmannered boor to retract his aspersions.

Charles, you are too warm and impetuous!—

Too warm, sir! when I hear my father loaded with the foulest appellations?

You are young, and ill-qualified to terminate in the proper way a business of this serious aspect: leave it to me!

Excuse me, my father! Though the names I have repeated were bestowed upon you, it was against me that the insult was employed. I must return immediately, and obtain justice. This is a moment that must in some degree fix my character for fortitude and determination, and I cannot withdraw from the duty it imposes. *Only tell me what I have to say. Furnish me with a direct and*

and unambiguous explanation of what Dupont has objected to us, and I undertake for the rest.

I see, my son, that you are moved, and I will trust you!

He seized my hand, he gazed earnestly in my face, he seemed prepared to devour every word I should utter.

Gaspar de Coligny, the flower of the French nobility, has been with me this morning. He has stated to me in an ingenuous and friendly way the same difficulty, with which Dupont has so brutally taunted you. I was meditating and arranging my answer but now, when you entered the room.

As I uttered these words, Charles let go my hand, and withdrew his eyes, with evident tokens of disappointment and chagrin. He paused for a few moments, and then resumed:

Why do you tell me of meditation and arrangement! Why did you send away Coligny unanswered, or why baffle and evade the earnestness of my enquiries? I know not all the sources of wealth; but I cannot doubt that the medium through which wealth has honourably flowed may, without effort, and premeditation, easily be explained. A just and brave man acts fearlessly and with explicitness; he does not shun, but court, the scrutiny of mankind; he lives in the face of day, and the whole world confesses the clearness of his spirit and the rectitude of his conduct.

Sir, I have just set my foot on the threshold of life. There is one lesson you have taught me which I swear never to forget, to hold life and all its pleasures cheap, in comparison with an honourable fame. My soul burns with the love of distinction. I am impatient to burst away from the goal, and commence the illustrious career. I feel that I have a hand and a heart capable of executing the purposes that my soul conceives. Uninjured to dis-
honour,

honour, or to any thing that should control the passion of my bosom, think, sir, what are my emotions at what has just occurred!

I was bred in obscurity and a humble station. I owed this disadvantage, you tell me, to your error. I forgave you; I was content; I felt that it was incumbent on me by my sword and my own exertions to hew my way to distinction. You have since exchanged the lowness of our situation for riches and splendour. At this revolution I felt no displeasure; I was well satisfied to start upon more advantageous terms in the race I determined to run. But, sir, whence came these riches? Riches and poverty are comparatively indifferent to me; but I was not born to be a mark for shame to point her finger at. A little while ago you were poor; you were the author of your own poverty; you dissipated your paternal estate. Did I reproach you? No; you were poor, but not dishonoured! I attended your couch in sickness; I exerted my manual labour to support you in affliction. I honoured you for your affection to my mother; I listened with transport to the history of your youth; I was convinced I should never blush to call Reginald de St. Leon my father. I believed that lessons of honour, so impressive as those you instilled into my infant mind, could never flow but from an honourable spirit. Oh, if there is any thing equivocal or ignoble in the riches we have displayed, restore me, instantly restore me to unblemished and virtuous poverty!

I was astonished at the firmness and manliness of spirit that Charles upon this occasion discovered. I could scarcely believe that these were the thoughts and words of a youth under seventeen years of age. I felt that every thing illustrious and excellent might be augured of one who, at these immature years, manifested so lofty and generous a soul. I could have pressed him in my arms, have indulged my emotions in sobs and tears of transport.

transport, and congratulated myself that I was father to so worthy a son. But his temper and manners awed, and held me at a distance. This was one consequence of the legacies of the stranger!

Charles! said I, your virtues extort my confidence. For the world a tale must be prepared that shall serve to elude its curiosity and its malice. But to you I confess, there is a mystery annexed to the acquisition of this wealth that can never be explained.

He stood aghast at my words. Am I to believe my ears? A tale prepared! A mystery never to be explained! I adjure you by all that you love, and all that you hold sacred——!

His voice was drowned in a sudden gush of tears. With an action of earnestness and deprecation, he took hold of my hand.

No, sir, no artful tale, no disguise, no hypocrisy!—— As he spoke, his voice suddenly changed, his accent became clear and determined.—Will you consent this very hour to quit the court of Dresden, and to resign fully and without reserve this accursed wealth, for the acquisition of which you refuse to account?

Whence, replied I, have you the insolence to make such a proposal?——No, I will not!

Then I swear by the omnipresent and eternal God, you shall never see or hear of me more!

I perceived that this was no time for the assertion of paternal authority. I saw that the poor boy was strangely and deeply moved, and I endeavoured to soothe him. I felt that the whole course of his education had inspired him with an uncontrollable and independent spirit, and that it was too late to endeavour to repress it.

My dear Charles, said I, what is come to you? When I listen to a language like this from your lips, I scarcely know you for my son. This impertinent Dupont has put you quite beside yourself. Another time we will talk

talk over the matter calmly; and depend upon it, every thing shall be made out to your satisfaction.

Do not imagine, sir, that my self-possession is not perfect and complete. I know what I do, and my resolution is unalterable. If you have any explanation to give, give it now. If you will yield to my proposal, declare your assent, and I am again your son. But to bear the insults of my fellows unanswered, or to live beneath the consciousness of an artful and fictitious tale, no consideration on earth shall induce me. I love you, sir; I cannot forget your lessons or your virtues. I love my mother and my sisters; no words can tell how dearly and how much. But my resolution is taken, I separate myself from you all and for ever. Nothing in my mind can come in competition with a life of unblemished honour.

And are you such a novice, as to need the being told that honour is a prize altogether out of the reach of an unknown and desolate wanderer, such as you propose to become? My wealth, boy, is unlimited; and can buy silence from the malicious, and shouts and applause from all the world. A golden key unlocks the career of glory, which the mean and the penniless are never allowed to enter.

I am not such a novice, as not to have heard the language of vice, though I never expected to hear it from a father. Poverty with integrity shall content me. The restless eagerness of my spirit is so great, that I will trust to its suggestions, and hope to surmount the obstacles of external appearance. If I am disappointed in this, and destined to perish unheard of and unremembered, at least I will escape reproach. I will neither be charged with the deeds, nor give utterance to the maxims, of dishonour.

Charles, replied I, be not the calumniator of your father! I swear to you by every thing that is sacred; and
you

you know my integrity; never did the breath of falsehood pollute these lips; ———

He passionately interrupted me. Did the stranger bequeath you three thousand crowns? Have you lately received an unexpected acquisition by the death of a near relation in France.

I was silent. This was not a moment for trifling and equivocation.

Oh, my father, how is your character changed and subverted? You say true. For sixteen years I never heard a breath of falsehood from your lips; I trusted you as I would the oracles of eternal truth. But it is past! A few short months have polluted and defaced a whole life of integrity! In how many obscurities and fabulous inconsistencies have you entangled yourself? Nor is it the least of the calamities under which my heart sickens at this moment, that I am reduced to hold language like this to a father!

What misery was mine, to hear myself thus arraigned by my own son, and to be unable to utter one word in reply to his accusations! To be thus triumphed over by a stripling; and to feel the most cruel degradation, in the manifestation of an excellence that ought to have swelled my heart with gratulation and transport! I had recollected my habitual feelings for near forty years of existence; I had dropped from my memory my recent disgrace, and dared to appeal to my acknowledged veracity; when this retort from my son came to plunge me tenfold deeper in a sea of shame. He proceeded:

I am no longer your son! I am compelled to disclaim all affinity with you? But this is not all. By your dishonour, you have cut me off from the whole line of my ancestors. I cannot claim affinity with them, without acknowledging my relation to you. You have extinguished abruptly an illustrious house. The sun of St. Leon is set for ever! Standing as I do a candidate for honourable

honourable fame, I must henceforth stand by myself, as if a man could be author of his own existence, and must expect no aid, no favour, no prepossession, from any earthly consideration, save what I am and what I shall perform.

My son, replied I, you cut me to the heart. Such is the virtue you display, that I must confess myself never to have been worthy of you, and I begin to fear I am now less worthy of you than ever. Yet you must suffer me to finish what I was about to say when you so passionately interrupted me. I swear then by every thing that is sacred, that I am innocent. Whatever interpretation the world may put upon my sudden wealth, there is no shadow of dishonesty or guilt connected with its acquisition. The circumstances of the story are such that they must never be disclosed; I am bound to secrecy by the most inviolable obligations, and this has led me to utter a forged and inconsistent tale. But my conscience has nothing with which to reproach me. If then, Charles, my son, once my friend, my best and dearest consolation! — I pressed his hand, and my voice faltered, as I spoke — if you are resolute to separate yourself from me, at least take this recollection with you wherever you go, — Whatever may be my external estimation, I am not the slave of vice, your father is not a villain!

Alas, my father! rejoined Charles, mournfully, what am I to believe? What secret can be involved in so strange a reverse of fortune, that is not dishonourable? You have given utterance to different fictions on the subject, fictions that you now confess to be such; how am I to be convinced that what you say at this moment is not dictated more by a regard for my tranquillity, than by the simplicity of conscious truth? If I believe you, I am afraid my credit will be the offspring rather of inclination, than of probability. And indeed, if I believe you, what avails it? The world will not believe. Your
character

character is blasted; your honour is destroyed; and, unless I separate myself from you and disown your name, I shall be involved in the same disgrace.

Saying thus, he left me, and in about half an hour returned. His return I had not foreseen; I had made no use of his absence. My mind was overcome, my understanding was stupified, by a situation and events I had so little expected. I had stood, unmoved, leaning against the wall, from the instant of his departure. I seemed rooted to the spot, incapable of calling up my fortitude, or arranging my ideas. My eyes had rolled, my brow was knit, I had bit my lips and my tongue with agony. From time to time I had muttered a few words,—My son! my son!—wealth! wealth!—my wife!—my son! but they were incoherent and without meaning.

Charles re-entered the apartment where the preceding conversation had passed, and the noise he made in entering roused me. He had his hat in his hand, which he threw from him, and exclaimed with an accent of dejection and anguish, My father!—farewel!

Cruel, cruel boy! can you persist in your harsh and calamitous resolution? If you have no affection for me, yet think of your mother and your sisters!

Seek not, sir, to turn me from my purpose! The struggle against it in my own bosom has been sufficiently severe, but it must be executed.—His voice, as he spoke, was inward, stifled and broken with the weight of his feelings.

Then—farewel! I replied. Yet take with you some provision for your long and perilous adventure. Name the sum you will accept, and, whatever is its amount, it shall instantly be yours. I will have nothing. It is this wealth, with whose splendour I was at first child enough to be dazzled, that has destroyed us. My fingers shall not be contaminated with an atom of it. What is to be my fate, as yet, I know not. But I am young, and
strong.

strong, and enterprising, and courageous. The lessons of honour and nobility live in my bosom. Though my instructor is lost, his instructions shall not be vain!

Once more farewell! From my heart I thank you for your protestations of innocence. Never will I part with this last consolation, to believe them. I have recollected the manner in which they were uttered; it was the manner of truth. If there be any evidence of a contrary tendency, that I will forget. Though to the world I shall be without father and without relatives, I will still retain this sacred consolation for my hours of retirement and solitude, that my ancestors were honourable, and my father, in spite of all presumptions to the contrary,—was innocent.

How hard it is to quit for ever a family of love and affection, as ours has been! Bear witness for me, how deeply I sympathised with you at Paris, in Switzerland, in Constance! Though now you dissolve the tie between us, yet, till now, never had a son greater reason for gratitude to a father. You and my mother have made me what I am; and that I may preserve what you have made me, I now cast myself upon an untried world. The recollection of what I found you in the past period of my life, shall be for ever cherished in my memory!

I quit my mother and my sisters without leave-taking or adieu. It would be a fruitless and painful addition to what each party must learn to bear. Dear, excellent, peerless protector and companions of my early years! my wishes are yours, my prayers shall be for ever poured out for you! You, sir, who rob them of a son and a brother, be careful to make up to them a loss, which I doubt not they will account grievous! I can do nothing for them. I can throw myself into the arms of poverty; it is my duty. But, in doing so, I must separate myself from them, assuredly innocent, and worthy of more
and

and greater benefits than I could ever confer on them!—Farewel!

Saying this, he threw himself into my arms, and I felt the agonies of a parting embrace.

CHAP. XVIII.

FOR some time I could not believe him departed. When I retired to rest, I felt the want of Charles to press my hand, and wish me refreshing slumbers; and I passed on, sad and solitary, to my chamber. When I came next morning into the breakfasting room, Charles was not there, to greet me with looks of affection and duty; and the gilding and ornaments of the apartment were to me no less disconsolate than the damp and sootiness of a dungeon.

I hoped he would return. I knew how tenderly he was attached to his mother and his sisters; I was fully convinced that the affection for me which had been the perpetual habit of his mind, could not be entirely eradicated from his heart. I mentioned him not in my letters to Constance; the pen lingered, my hand trembled, when I thought of him; I could neither pretend that he was with me, nor announce the catastrophe of his absence. But I opened the letters of Marguerite with still increasing impatience. Finding that he did not return to me, I hoped that some alteration of the extraordinary resolution he had formed would lead him to Constance. In vain I hoped! There reached me, by no conveyance, from no quarter, tidings of my son!

How surprising an event! A youth, not seventeen years of age, forming and executing in the same instant *the purpose of flying from his parents and his family! Deserting all his hopes, all his attachments, all his fortune!*

tune! Refusing the smallest particle of assistance or provision in his entrance upon the wide scene of the world! Oh, Charles! exclaimed I, you are indeed an extraordinary and admirable youth! But are you fortified against all the temptations of the world and all its hardships? Do your tender years qualify you to struggle with its unkindness, its indifference and its insults? In how few quarters is merit ever treated with the attention and benevolence it deserves! How often is it reduced to tremble with indignation at the scoffs and brutality to which it is exposed, and at the sight of folly and vice exalted in its stead, and appointed its despot and its master! My son, my son! what will be your fate! Is your unseasoned frame reserved to perish by hunger, in barren deserts, and beneath inclement skies? Will you not in some hour of bitter disappointment and unpitied loneliness, lay yourself down in despair and die? Will you not be made the slave of some capricious tyrant for bread? Generous as is your nature, will it be eternally proof against reiterated temptation? Upon what a world are you turned adrift! a world of which you know as little, as the poor affrighted soul of a dying man knows, when launching into the mysterious, impenetrable abyss of eternity! Unnatural father, to have reduced my only son to this cruel alternative! I should with a less aching and agonising heart have accompanied his senseless remains to the grave. Dreadful as that parting is, there at least the anxious mind of the survivor has rest. There are no thoughts and devices in the silence of the tomb. There all our prospects end, and we are no longer sensible to pain, to persecution, to insult and to agony. But Charles, thus departed, wandering on the face of the globe, without protector, adviser or resource, no lapse of years can put a close upon my anxiety for him! If I am in ease and prosperity, I cannot relish them, for my exposed and living son may be at that moment in the depth

of misery! If I am myself oppressed and suffering, the thought of what may be his fate, will form a dreadful addition to all my other calamities! What am I to say of him upon my return to Constance? If he had died; this was a natural casualty; and, whatever grief it might occasion, time no doubt would mollify and abate it. But what account can now be rendered of him to his disconsolate mother and terrified sisters? How can I lift up my head in their presence, or meet the glance of thier reproachful eyes!

The idea had occurred to me, in the instant of Charles' departure, and immediately after his exit, of detaining or bringing him back by force. He was by his extreme youth, according to the maxims of the world, still in a state of guardianship, and unqualified to be the chooser of his own actions. But to this mode of proceeding, however deeply I felt the catastrophe which had taken place, I could never consent. It was in utter hostility to the lessons of chivalry and honour, with which I had been familiarised from my earliest infancy. There might be cases, in which this restraint laid by a father upon his child would be salutary. But the idea which had occasioned the secession of Charles, was decisive in this instance. What right had I to chain him to dishonour? The whole bent of his education had been to impress him with the feelings by which he was now actuated. If I detained him for a short time, was there any vigilance on earth that could finally prevent him from executing a purpose upon which his whole soul was resolved? Or, suppose there were, must not the consequence be to break his spirit, to deprive him of all manliness and energy, and to render him the mere drooping and soulless shadow of that conspicuous hero I had been anxious to make him? It might be said indeed, that this was the determination of a boy, formed in an hour, and that, if I detained him only long enough for deliberation and revisal, he would

would of his own accord retract so desperate a project. But I felt that it was a resolution formed to endure, and was built upon principles that could not change so long as an atom of his mind remained. No; I was rather disposed to say, however grievous was the wound he inflicted on me, Go, my son! Act upon the dictates of your choice, as I have acted on mine! I admire your resolution, though I cannot imitate it. Your purpose is lofty and Godlike; and he that harbours it, was not born to be a slave. Be free; and may every power propitious to generosity and virtue, smooth your path through life, and smile upon your desires!

The anguish I felt for having lost my son, and in this painful and reproachful manner, was not diminished to me either by society or amusement. I dared not go out of my house. I saw no one but my own attendants. I had not the courage to meet the aspect of a human creature. I knew not how far persons in Dresden might have heard the injurious reports which occasioned the flight of my son, or even have been acquainted with the nature of that flight. I had promised to see Coligny again, but, alas! the affair which had at first led me to wish to see him, was now at an end. I had no heart to seek him; nor indeed did I know what story I was to tell him, or how I was to remove the suspicions he had urged against me. The machine of human life, though constituted of a thousand parts, is in all its parts regularly and systematically connected; nor is it easy to insert an additional member, the spuriousness of which an accurate observation will not readily detect. How was I to assign a source of my wealth different from the truth, which would not be liable to investigation, and, when investigated, would not be seen to be counterfeit? This indeed is the prime source of individual security in human affairs, that whatever any man does, may be subjected to examination, and whatever does not admit of being ration-
factorily

factorily accounted for, exposes him whom it concerns to the most injurious suspicions. This law of our nature, so salutary in its general operation, was the first source of all my misfortunes.

I began now seriously to consider what judgment I was to pass upon the bequests of the stranger. Were they to be regarded as a benefit or a misfortune? Ought they to be classed with the poisoned robe of Nessus, which, being sent as a token of affection, was found in the experiment, to eat into the flesh, and burn up the vitals, of him that wore it? Should I from this instant reject their use, and returning to the modes of life established among my fellow men, content myself with the affection of those with whom I had intercourse, though poverty and hardships mingled with the balm?

The experiment I had made of these extraordinary gifts was a short one; but how contrary were all the results I had arrived at, from those I looked for? When the stranger had appeared six months before at the cottage of the lake, he had found me a poor man indeed, but rich in the confidence, and happy in the security and content of every member of my family. I lived in the bosom of nature, surrounded with the luxuriance of its gifts, and the sublimity of its features, which the romantic elevation of my soul particularly fitted me to relish. In my domestic scene I beheld the golden age renewed, the simplicity of pastoral life without its grossness, a situation remote from cities and courts, from traffic and hypocrisy, yet not unadorned with taste, imagination and knowledge. Never was a family more united in sentiments and affection. Now all this beauteous scene was defaced! All was silence, suspicion and reserve. The one party dared not be ingenuous, and the other felt that all the paradise of attachment was dwindled to an empty name. No questions were asked; for no honest answer was given or expected. Though corporeally we might

sit in the same apartment, in mind a gulph, wide, impassable and tremendous, gaped between us. My wife pined in speechless grief, and, it was to be feared, had sustained a mortal blow. My son, my only son, a youth of such promise that I would not have exchanged him for empires, had disappeared, and, as he had solemnly protested, for ever. My heart was childless; my bosom was bereaved of its dearest hope. It was for him principally that I had accepted, that I had rejoiced in, the gifts of the stranger. My darling vision was to see him clothed in the harness, surrounded with the insignia, of a hero. There was nothing I so earnestly desired, as that his merits, graced with the favours of fortune, might cause him to stand confessed the first subject of France, a situation more envious than that of its monarch, since he who holds it is raised by deeds and the other only by birth, and if less respected by interested courtiers, is certain to be more honoured by the impartial voice of history. But, if I felt thus desolate and heart-broken for the loss of my son, what would be the sentiments of his mother, more susceptible to feel, and, in her present weakness of spirits, less vigorous to bear than myself, when the dreadful tidings should be communicated to her?

Yet I could not resolve to renounce donations which I had so dearly appropriated. I held it to be base and cowardly to surrender gifts so invaluable, upon so insufficient an experiment. He, I thought, must be a man of ignoble and groveling spirit, who could easily be prevailed on to part with unbounded wealth and immortal life. I had but just entered the vast field that was opened to me. It was of the nature of all great undertakings, to be attended with difficulties and obstacles in the commencement, to present a face calculated to discourage the man that is infirm of purpose. But it became my descent, my character and pretensions, to show myself
scene

serene in the midst of storms. Perseverance and constancy are the virtues of a man. Affairs of this extensive compass often prove in the issue the reverse of what they seemed in the outset. The tempest might be expected to disperse, difficulties to unravel themselves, and unlocked for occurrences to arise. All opposition and hostile appearance give way before him who goes calmly onward, and scorns to be dismayed.

CHAP. XIX.

IT was thus that I spurred myself to persist in the path upon which I had entered. Having remained some time at Dresden, flattering myself with the hope that Charles might yet join me before I quitted that city, I began to think of once more turning my steps towards the residence of my family. This was no cheerful thought; but upon what was I to determine? I had a wife whom I ardently loved, and three daughters the darlings of my heart. Because I had lost a beloved son, was I to estrange myself from these? I already felt most painfully the detachment and widowhood to which I was reduced, and I clung with imperious affection to what remained of my race. The meeting I purposed must be a melancholy one; but, in the sorrows of the heart there is a purer and nobler gratification, than in the most tumultuous pleasures where affection is silent. I looked forward indeed to scenes of endless variety and attraction, but in the mean time what seemed first to demand my attention was the beloved circle I had left behind in the city of Constance. I retraced upon the present occasion the route I had lately pursued with my son. How different were now *my sensations*? My heart was then indeed painfully *impressed with the variance and dissolution of confidence* that

that had arisen between me and his mother. It was perhaps principally for the sake of banishing this impression, that I had had recourse to the splendour of equipage and attendance which was first assumed upon the journey from Constance to Dresden. Nor, frivolous as this expedient may appear in the unattractive dispassionateness of narrative, had it been by any means weak of effect at the time it was employed. When Charles was once mounted on his proud and impatient steed, and decorated in rich and costly attire, I felt as it were the sluggishness of my imagination roused; I surveyed his shape and his countenance with inexpressible complacency; and already anticipated the period when he was to become the favourite of his sovereign and his country's pride. Now I returned with the same retinue, but the place that had been occupied by my son was empty. I sought him with frantic and restless gaze; I figured him to my disturbed and furious imagination, till the sensations and phantoms of my brain became intolerable; I raved and imprecated curses on myself. I endeavoured to divert my thoughts by observing the scenes that passed before me. They talked to me of Charles; they had been pointed out by each to each, and had been the subject of our mutual comment. Though Charles was endowed with a high relish for the beauties of nature, and, in our little retreat on the borders of the lake, had lived in the midst of them, he had seen little of the variety of her features; and the journey we made through the heart of Germany had furnished him with continual food for admiration and delight. Nor did the scenes I had beheld merely remind me of the sensations they produced in Charles; they led me through a wider field. I recollected long conversations and digressive excursions which had been started by the impression they made. I recollected many passages and occurrences to which they had not the slightest reference, but which, having arisen
while

while they constituted the visible scene, were forcibly revived by its re-appearance. Thus, from various causes, my lost and lamented son was not a moment out of my thoughts during the journey. While I continued at Dresden, I seemed daily to expect his return; but, no sooner did I quit that city, than despair took possession of my heart.

Thus, anxious and distressed, I arrived at Prague, and soon after at Ratisbon. I travelled slowly, because, though I was desirous of returning to Constance, I anticipated my arrival there with little complacence. As I drew nearer to my family, I felt more distinctly the impossibility of presenting myself before them, without first endeavouring to take off the shock they would sustain at seeing me return without my son. I therefore resolved to send forward a servant from Ratisbon, whom I directed to make all practicable speed, as I designed to wait for an answer he should bring me at the city of Munich. To attempt to write to Marguerite on this subject, was a severe trial to me. The whole, however, that I proposed to myself was to remove the surprise which would be occasioned by seeing me alone, and to anticipate questions that it would be impossible for me to hear without anguish of mind and perturbation of countenance. I therefore took care to express myself in such terms, as should lead Marguerite to believe that I had voluntarily left her son in Saxony, and that in no very long time he would rejoin his family. I trusted to subsequent events to unfold the painful catastrophe, and could not prevail on myself to shock her maternal feelings so much as I must necessarily do, if I informed her of the whole at once. Charles had not been mentioned but in ordinary terms and the accustomed language of affection, in the letters I had recently received from Constance, and I *was therefore* convinced that he had neither gone to that place,

place, nor conveyed thither any account of his proceeding.

The answer I received from Marguerite by my messenger was as follows :

“ Your absence has been long and critical, and the welfare of your daughters seems to require that we should rejoin each other as speedily as may be. Whether we should meet here or at any other place you must determine. It is, however, right I should inform you that, during your absence, rumour has been busy with your reputation. What the extent or importance of the ill reports circulated of you may be, I am scarcely competent to judge. We have lived in uniform privacy, and it is natural to suppose that the portion of censure that has reached us, is but a small part of what really exists. The mode in which you have proceeded, and the extraordinary figure you have made in a progress through Germany, have given weight to these insinuations.—But it is not my intention to comment on what you have done.

“ You appear to design that I should understand you have left my son behind you in Saxony. Poor Charles! I had a letter from him three weeks ago, in which he informs me of what has happened, and apologises in the most pathetic terms for any seeming want of regard to me in his conduct, at the very moment that his heart bleeds for my fate. I did not think it necessary to communicate this circumstance to you. I have done with complaining. Now that I have fallen into the worst and most unlooked for misfortunes, I have a gratification that I do not choose to part with, in shutting up my sorrows in my own breast.

“ Oh, Charles, my son, my idol! What is become of you? For what calamities are you reserved? He tells me it is necessary that I should never see or hear of him again. Never—I—his mother!—Reginald, there are some wounds that we may endeavour to forgive; but

they leave a sentiment in the heart, the demonstrations of which may perhaps be restrained, but which it is not in nature wholly to subdue. If I did but know where to find or to write to my poor boy, I would take my girls with me and partake his honest and honourable poverty, and never again join the shadow of him who was my husband. Forgive me, Reginald! I did not intend to say this! If I should prove unable to control the impatience of my grief, do not inflict the punishment of my offence on your innocent daughters!

As to your fiction of voluntarily leaving him behind for further improvement, it corresponds with every thing you have lately attempted to make me believe. I no longer expect truth from you. For seventeen years I had a husband. Well, well! I ought not perhaps to repine. I have had my share of the happiness which the present life is calculated to afford.

"Reginald! I have not long to live. When I tell you this, I am not giving way to melancholy presentiment. I will exert myself for the benefit of my girls. They will have a grievous loss in me, and for their sake I will live as long as I can. But I feel that you have struck me to the heart. My nights are sleepless; my flesh is wasted; my appetite is entirely gone. You will presently be able to judge whether I am deceiving myself. The prospect for these poor creatures, who are at present all my care, is a dismal one. I know not for what they are reserved, but I can hope for nothing good. When I am dead, remember, and be a father to them. I ask nothing for myself; I have no longer any concern with life; but, if my dying request can have weight with you, make up to them the duty you have broken to me. By all our past loves, by the cordiality and confidence in which we have so long lived, by the singleness and sincerity of our affection, by the pure delights, so seldom experienced in married life, that have attended our union, I conjure you listen to me and obey me in this!"

If I were deeply distressed for the loss of my son, if I looked forward with a mingled sensation of eagerness and alarm to the approaching interview with my family, it may easily be imagined that this letter formed a heavy addition to my mental anguish. I confess I thought it a cruel one. Marguerite might well suppose that the departure of Charles was a circumstance I must strongly feel, and she should not have thus aggravated the recent wounds of paternal grief. Some allowance, however, was to be made for a mother. When we are ourselves racked with intolerable pain, that certainly is not the time at which we can rationally be expected to exert the nicest and most vigilant consideration for another. Add to which, she was innocent of the calamities she suffered, and could not but know that I was their sole author. But, whatever may be decided as to the propriety of the letter, its effect upon my mind was eminently salutary. I instantly determined on the conduct it became me to pursue.

I lost not a moment. From Dresden to Munich I had advanced with slow and unwilling steps; from Munich to Constance I proceeded as rapidly, as the modes of travelling and the nature of the roads would permit. I left my retinue at the gates of the town, and flew instantly to the apartments of my family. I hastened up stairs, and, as I entered the sitting-room, I saw the first and most exemplary of matrons surmounted by her blooming daughters. I instantly perceived a great alteration in her appearance. Her look was dejected; her form emaciated; her countenance sickly and pale. She lifted up her eyes as I entered, but immediately dropped them again, without any discernable expression, either of congratulation or resentment. I embraced my children with undescribable emotion; I said within myself, The love and affection I had reserved for Charles shall be divided among you, and added to the share you each possess of my

my heart! Having saluted them in turn, I addressed myself to Marguerite, telling her that I must have some conversation with her instantly. My manner was earnest: she led the way into another apartment.

I felt my heart overflowing at my tongue.

I am come to you, cried I, a repenting prodigal. Take me and mould me at your pleasure!

She looked up. She was struck with the honest fervour of my expression. She answered in almost forgotten terms, and with a peculiar fulness of meaning, My husband!—It seemed as if the best years and the best emotions of our life were suddenly renewed.

Most adorable of women! I continued: do you think I can bear that you should die, and I your murderer? No man in any age or climate of the world ever owed so much to a human creature as I owe to you; no woman was ever so ardently loved! no woman ever so much deserved to be loved! If you were to die, I should never know peace again. If you were to die the victim of any miscalculation of mine, I should be the blackest of criminals!

Reginald! replied she, I am afraid I have been wrong. I am afraid I have written harshly to you. You have a feeling heart, and I have been too severe. Forgive me! it was the effect of love. Affection cannot view with a tranquil eye the faults of the object beloved.

Let it be forgotten! Let the last six months be blotted from our memory, be as though they had never existed!

She looked at me. Her look seemed to say, though she would not give the sentiment words, That can never be; the loss of Charles, and certain other calamities of that period, are irretrievable!

I resign myself into your hands! I have been guilty; I have had secrets; meditations engendered and shut up in my own bosom; but it shall be so no more! The tide
of

of affection kept back from its natural channel, now flows with double impetuosity. Never did I love you, not when you first came a virgin to my arms, not on the banks of the Garonne, not in the cottage of the lake, so fervently, so entirely, as I love you now! Be my director; do with me as you please! I have never been either wise or virtuous, but when I have been implicitly guided by you!

I have wealth; I am forbidden by the most solemn obligations to discover the source of that wealth. This only I may not communicate; in all things else govern me despotically! Shall I resign it all? Shall I return to the cottage of the lake? Shall I go, a houseless and helpless wanderer, to the furthest quarter of the globe? speak the word only, and it shall be done! I prefer your affection, your cordial regard, in the most obscure and meanest retreat, to all that wealth can purchase, or kings can give!

Reginald, I thank you! I acknowledge in your present language and earnestness the object of my first and only love. This return to your true character gives me all the pleasure I am now capable of receiving. But it is too late. My son is lost; that cannot be retrieved. Your reputation is blasted; I am sorry you are returned hither; Constance is in arms against you, and I will not answer for the consequence. For myself; I grieve to tell you so; I am ashamed of my weakness; but—my heart is broken! I loved you so entirely, that I was not able to bear any suspension of our confidence. I had passed with you through all other misfortunes, and the firmness of my temper was not shaken. For this one misfortune, that seemed the entire dissolution of our attachment, I was not prepared. I feel, every morning as I rise, the warnings of my disease. My nights are sleepless; my appetite is gone from me.

Oh,

Oh, Marguerite, talk not thus; distract me not with the most fatal of images! Our confidence shall return; all the causes of your malady shall be removed! With the causes, the symptoms, depend on it, will disappear. Your youth, your tranquility, your happiness, shall be renewed! Oh, no, you shall not die! We will yet live to love and peace!

Flatter not yourself with vain hopes, my love! I feel something wrong within me, which is rapidly wearing my body to decay. Reconcile your mind to what very soon must happen! Prepare yourself for being the only parent to your remaining offspring! I have composed my spirit, and calmly wait my fate. You have now administered to me the only consolation I aspired to, by this return to your true character, which affords me a sanguine hope that you will faithfully discharge the duty to your offspring, which, when I am gone, will be doubly urgent on you.

I was grieved to see that the mind of Marguerite was so deeply impressed with the notion that she had but a short time to live. I could not bear to imagine for a moment that her prognostic was just. The thought seemed capable of driving me to distraction. I however conceived that the best thing that could be done for the present, was to turn the conversation to some other topic.

Well, well, my love! I answered. There are some things that are immediately pressing. Direct me, direct a husband, so amply convinced of your discretion, what I am to do at present! Shall I instantly annihilate all that has made this unfortunate breach between us; shall I resign my wealth, from whatever source derived? Whither shall we go? Shall we return to the cottage of the lake? Shall we retreat into some distant part of the world?

How can you expect me, said Marguerite, faintly smiling, to advise you respecting the disposal of a wealth,
of

of the amount of which I am uninformed, and the source of which is invisible? But I guess your secret. The stranger who died your guest, was in possession of the philosopher's stone, and he has bequeathed to you his discovery. I have heard of this art, though I confess I was not much inclined to credit it. I do not ask you to confirm my conjecture: I do not wish that you should violate any engagements into which you have entered. But, upon putting circumstances together, which I have been inevitably compelled to do, I apprehend it can be nothing else. I am astonished that a conjecture so obvious, should have offered itself to my mind so late.

If your wealth is of any other nature, ample as it apparently is, it is a natural question to ask, to whom is it to be resigned? The ordinary wealth of the world is something real and substantial, and can neither be created nor dissipated with a breath. But, if your wealth be of the kind I have named, let me ask, is it possible to resign it? A secret is a thing with which we may choose whether we will become acquainted; but, once known, we cannot become unacquainted with it at pleasure. Your wealth, upon my supposition, will always be at your beck; and it is perhaps beyond the strength of human nature to refuse, under some circumstances, at least in some emergencies, to use the wealth which is in our reach.

It has been our mutual misfortune that such an engine has been put into your hands. It has been your fault to make an indiscreet use of it. Gladly would I return to the tranquil and unsuspected poverty of the cottage of the lake. But that is impossible. You have lost your son; you have lost your honest fame; the life of your Marguerite is undermined and perishing. If it were possible for us to return to our former situation and our former peace, still, my Reginald! forgive me if I say, I doubt the inflexibility of your resolution. The gift of
unbounded

unbounded wealth, if you possess it, and, with wealth, apparently at least, distinction and greatness, is too powerful a temptation. Nor, though I should trust your resistance, could I be pleased with a husband with the possession of these extraordinary powers. It sets too great a distance between the parties. It destroys that communion of spirit which is the soul of the marriage tie. A consort should be a human being and an equal. But to this equality and simple humanity it is no longer in your power to return.

Circumstanced then as we now are, the marriage union, you must allow me to say, irreparably dissolved, your son lost, your fair fame destroyed, your orphan daughters to be provided for, I know not if I should advise you to forget the prerogative that has been bought for you at so dreadful a price. Beside, if I am not mistaken, there are great trials in reserve for you. I am afraid your present situation is extremely critical. I am afraid the suspicions you have excited will cost you dear. At all events I believe it to be but a necessary precaution that we should fly from Constance. I have nothing therefore to recommend to you on the subject of wealth but discretion. I shall not long live to be your adviser. I shall always regard the donation you have received, you cannot wonder that I should so regard it, as one of the most fearful calamities to which a human being can be exposed. If you had used your prerogative with discretion, you might perhaps, though I confess I do not see how, have escaped the obloquy of the world. Into your domestic scene, where the interest is more lively, and the watch upon you more unremitted, it must have introduced alienation and distrust. As it is, I see you surrounded with dangers of a thousand denominations. Police has its eyes upon you; superstition will regard you as the familiar of demons; avarice will turn upon you a regard of jealousy and insatiable appetite. If I could recover
from

from the weakness that at present besets me, and continue to live, I foresee more and severer trials, both at home and abroad, than any I have yet sustained; and I am almost thankful to that providence which has decreed to take me away from the evil to come.

One thing further let me add. I will speak it, not in the character of a censor, but a friend. It must ever be right and useful that a man should be undeceived in any erroneous estimate he may make of himself. I have loved you much; I found in you many good qualities; my imagination decorated you in the virtues that you had not; but you have removed the veil. An adept and an alchemist is a low character. When I married you, I supposed myself united to a nobleman, a knight and a soldier, a man who would have revolted with disdain from every thing that was poor-spirited and base. I lived with you long and happily. I saw faults; I saw imbecilities. I did not see them with indifference; but I endeavoured, and with a degree of success, to forget and to forgive them; they did not contaminate and corrupt the vitals of honour. At length you have completely reversed the scene. For a soldier, you present me with a projector and a chemist, a cold-blooded mortal, raking in the ashes of a crucible for a selfish and solitary advantage. Here is an end of all genuine dignity, and the truest generosity of soul. You cannot be ingenuous; for all your dealings are secrecy and darkness. You cannot have a friend; for the mortal lives not that can sympathise with your thoughts and emotions. A generous spirit, Reginald, delights to live upon equal terms with his associates and fellows. He would disdain, when offered to him, decisive and clandestine advantages. Equality is the soul of real and cordial society. A man of rank indeed does not live upon equal terms with the whole of his species; but his heart also can exult; for he has his equals. How unhappy the

Vcl. I. G g wretch,

wretch, the monster rather let me say, who is without an equal; who looks through the world, and in the world cannot find a brother; who is endowed with attributes which no living being participates with him; and who is therefore cut off for ever from all cordiality and confidence, can never unbend himself, but lives the solitary, joyless tenant of a prison, the materials of which are emeralds and rubies! How unhappy this wretch; how weak and ignoble the man that voluntarily accepts these laws of existence!

In the advice of Marguerite I saw that sound wisdom and discernment, by which in all the periods of our connection she had been so eminently characterised. With her views of the future I was not disposed to accord. I regarded them as obscured and discoloured by the unfortunate state of her health. I could not indeed refuse to believe that the prerogative I had received had been the parent of much domestic unhappiness. Willingly would I have resigned all that I had derived from the stranger, to be replaced in the situation in which his pernicious legacies had found me. He had robbed me of my son; he had destroyed my domestic peace; he had undermined the tranquility and health of the partner of my life. These calamities pressed with a heavy and intolerable weight at my heart. But, if, as Marguerite affirmed, they were irretrievable, or if they could once be removed, and the domestic advantages I had heretofore enjoyed be restored, I was not disposed to fear those external mischiefs which Marguerite so feelingly predicted. I could not believe that I should have such a league of foreign enemies to encounter, nor could I easily image to myself any external evils which it was not in the power of gold to remedy. These considerations I urged to my beloved partner, and by enforcing them endeavoured to remove those gloomy apprehensions, from the prevalence of which I feared much injury to her health. There was another circumstance

circumstance I was led particularly to insist on; I mean the nature of the secret intrusted to me.

I admire your discernment and ingenuity, Marguerite, said I, in your conjecture respecting the source of my wealth. I admire your delicacy in not pressing me to decide upon the truth of your conjecture. This only I must be permitted to say on that subject. It is a secret; and you will perceive that the same reasons, whatever they are, which make that secret obligatory on me, require that it should be respected by you. The same evils that my own indiscretion may draw on me, I shall be equally exposed to by any error or miscalculation of yours. I have therefore most earnestly and solemnly to conjure you, whatever misfortunes may hereafter befall me, in whatever perilous situation I may be involved, that you will never utter a syllable on this subject; and that, as I am the selected depository of this secret, and alone know with certainty what is its nature, you will trust our prosperity in this point to me.—Marguerite engaged to conduct herself as I desired.

The night which succeeded this explanation, was particularly soothing and grateful to me. I was relieved from a great and oppressive burthen. I was conscious of that particular species of pleasure which arises from the resolute discharge of an heroic duty. The peace I felt within shed its gay and reviving beams upon all around me. Reconciled to myself, I was filled with sanguine and agreeable visions of the future. My mind obstinately rejected all dark and hateful presages. I had intrusted myself and the direction of my conduct, as far as it was possible, to that better pilot, under whose guidance, if I had not avoided the rocks and quick-sands of life, I had at least escaped with little comparative injury. I felt therefore as if my domestic enjoyments were restored, and the pleasures of my better years were about to run over again their auspicious career. Not so Marguerite.

guerite. She was mild, gentle and soothing. Displeasure and resentment towards me were banished from her mind. She endeavoured to conquer her melancholy, and to forget the wounds that had been so fatal to her hopes. But her endeavours were fruitless. A fixed dejection clung to her heart; nor could the generous sweetness that pervaded her manners, hide from me entirely what was passing in her bosom.

During this interval we had talked over the plan of our future operations. Marguerite was exceedingly urgent with me to quit Constance; nor did I, though not impressed with her presentiments, feel any reluctance to that change of scene, which, I believed, would materially contribute to the serenity of her mind and the restoration of her health. We determined on some of the cities of Italy as the next place of our residence, and, fixed, if possible, to set out some time in the day or the next day after. The plan of proceeding to France, which had lately been a favourite with me, was a favourite no longer. That had been the project of cheerful and wanton prosperity. It had had for its object the re-establishment of my family honours, and the elevation of my son. Now my son was lost, my wife was oppressed with languor and disease, my house was overwhelmed with sorrow. This was no time for wantonness and triumph. If I could ever hope to resume the plans my frolic fancy had sketched, an interval at least of soberer hue must first be suffered to elapse.

My mind at this time sustained a revolution sufficiently remarkable, but of which the urgency of events that immediately succeeded, prevented me from ever ascertaining whether it would have proved temporary or permanent. When I first received the donation of the stranger, my thoughts, as I have already said, were in a state of enthusiastic transport, and, amidst the golden visions in which my fancy revelled, I became in a considerable

derable degree alienated from domestic sentiments and pleasures. If I still loved my wife and children, it was the love of habit rather than sympathy, more an anxiety for their prosperous success in the world, than an earnest craving for their presence and intercourse. This state of intoxication and rapture had now subsided. The events of the few last weeks had sobered my thoughts. Having lost my son, and being threatened with the loss of his mother, I was roused to a sense of their value. The influx of wealth and supernatural gifts had grown familiar to my mind, and now only occupied the background of the picture. I was once more a man, and I hoped to partake of the privileges and advantages of a man. The fate reserved for these hopes will speedily be seen.

Some readers will perhaps ask me why, anxious as I was for the life of Marguerite, and visible as was the decline of her health, I did not administer to her of the elixir of immortality which was one of my peculiar endowments. Such readers I have only to remind, that the pivot upon which the history I am composing turns, is a mystery. If they will not accept of my communication upon my own terms, they must lay aside my book. I am engaged in relating the incidents of my life, I have no intention to furnish the remotest hint respecting the science of which I am the depository. That science affords abundant reasons why the elixir in question might not, or rather could not, be imbibed by any other than an adept.

CHAP. XX.

THE morning after my return to my family, as I sat surrounded with my girls, and endeavouring to make myself their playmate and companion, certain officers of justice belonging to the supreme tribunal of the city entered my apartment. They were sent, as they informed me, to conduct me to prison. My blood at this intelligence mounted into my face.

To prison? cried I—wherefore?—what have I done?—I am no citizen of your state. What is the charge against me? Lead me not to prison: lead me to your chief magistrate!

You will be called up for examination, when his honour is at leisure to hear you: in the mean time you must go to prison.

Do those who sent you know that I am a native and a gentleman of France? They will be made to repent this insolence. Upon what pretence do they dare to act thus?

You will please not to talk of insolence to us. If you do not demean yourself quietly——

Silence, fellow! answered I fiercely. Lead the way!

By this time the children, astonished at a scene so alarming and unintelligible to them, began to express their terror in various ways. Julia, who was ready to faint, occupied the attention of her mother. The little Marguerite clung round my knees, and expressed her emotions by shrieks and cries. To see her father about to be torn from her by four strangers, the peculiarity of whose garb of office aggravated the rudeness of their countenances and the peremptoriness of their behaviour, was a spectacle which the affectionateness of her nature was unable to endure.

I will go with you presently, said I to the officers. *See, how you have terrified the children!*

Nay,

Nay, sir, if you will behave civilly, and make it worth our while, we do not desire to hurry you.

I was stung with the brutal assurance with which they thus set the liberty of a few moments at a price to me. But I checked my impatience. I felt that it would be both foolish and degrading to enter into contention with such wretches. I turned from them proudly, and took my child in my arms.

I will not be long gone, my love! said I. These people have made a mistake, and I shall soon be able to rectify it.

I fancy not, muttered one of them surlily.

They shall not take you away, papa; that they shall not! I will hold you, and will not let you go!

You are a good girl, Marguerite! But I know best what is proper, and you must not think to control me. The men will not do me any harm, child; they dare not. Perhaps I shall be back to dinner, and mama will then tell me how good you have been.

As I spoke, she looked steadfastly in my face; and then, flinging her arms round my neck, cried, Good bye, papa! and burst into a flood of tears.

I embraced the other children and their mother, and, saying to the latter significantly. Fear nothing; you know I have nothing to fear!—departed with my conductors.

The way to the citadel lay through the market place. The scene was already crowded; and I had the mortification to be led along as a criminal, in the midst of a thousand gazing eyes and enquiring tongues. New as every thing connected with my present situation was to me, I had not anticipated this vexation. I was stung with shame and impatience. To my dungeon! said I to my conductors sternly. If you had shown yourself better-humoured, cried the most brutal of them, we would have led you round by the back-way.

The

The master of the prison was somewhat less a savage than his officers. He knew my person, and had heard of my wealth. Does monsieur choose the best apartment, said he? Any where that I can be alone! answered I hastily: he hesitated a moment. I looked in his face: Oh, yes, you will be paid! He bowed, and showed me to a room.

I shut the door as he retired. What had happened to me was of little importance in itself. The impertinence of bailiffs and thief-takers is of no more real moment than the stinging of a gnat. But I was so utterly unacquainted with scenes of this nature! The pride of rank that swelled within me, made every appearance of restraint galling to my sense. From the instant I was able to write, man, no one, except in the voluntary compact of military service, had ever said to me, Go there! or, Do this! And now, was I to be directed by the very refuse of the species? Was I to learn the prudence of not replying to their insults? Was I to purchase, at a stipulated price, their patience and forbearance?—I request the reader to pardon me for troubling him with my novice feelings: I soon learned to understand the world—the world of a prison—better!

But, what was of more importance, I was apprehended as a criminal; I had been dragged a prisoner of justice through the streets of Constance; I was by and by, to be subjected to the interrogatories of the municipal tribunal. I could scarcely credit my senses, that such an indignity had happened to the blood of St. Leon. It is true, I was innocent. I was conscious whatever might be my imprudences and offences towards my own family, that I had done nothing to merit the animadversion of public justice. But this was of no consequence. Nothing, in my opinion, could wipe away the disgrace of being interrogated, examined! of having for an instant imputed to me the possibility of being a criminal! I writhed under
this

this dishonour, and felt it as a severer attack than the question, which was comparatively of ceremony and etiquette, that had oppressed me in my residence at Dresden.

The next day, when I was brought up for examination, I had expected to be the complainant, in demanding redress for the injury I had sustained. But I was mistaken.

I entered the room haughtily, and with the air of a man that felt himself aggrieved. Of this, however, the magistrate took no notice. Do you know, sir, said I, that I am a citizen and a gentleman of France? Are you acquainted with the treatment I have experienced? Have you lent your authority to that treatment?

Wait a few minutes, replied he with an imperious tone, and I shall be at leisure to attend to you.

I was silent. After the interval of nearly a quarter of an hour, he resumed:

You call yourself the count de St. Leon!

I do.

Perhaps, sir, you are uninformed of the purity with which justice is administered in the city within whose jurisdiction you now stand. Our state is a small one, and its magistrates are, therefore, enabled to discharge the office of a parent, not only to its proper citizens, but to all strangers that place themselves under its protection.

I remember, sir, that seven years ago, I and my wife and four children, sick and unfriended, were upon the point of perishing with hunger within the walls of this city!—The fact I mentioned was wholly foreign to the point with which I was at present concerned; but the parading arrogance of the man brought it forcibly to my memory, and wrung it from my lips.

Monsieur le Comte, replied he, you are petulant. It is not the office of a state to feed the souls it contains;

it could not do that without making them slaves. Its proper concern is to maintain them in that security and freedom of action, which may best enable them to support themselves.

I suppressed the emotions which the tone of this speech excited. I was unwilling to enter into contention with a man whom I regarded as inexpressibly my inferior.

Is it, cried I sternly, a part of the justice you boast of, to drag a man of rank and a stranger, from his home, without any intimation of the cause of his being so treated, and then, instead of investigating immediately the charge against him, to send him to prison unheard? I disdain to mention the behaviour of your officers: those things naturally grow out of the abuses practised by their superiors.

The mode of our proceeding, replied he, depends upon the seriousness of the crime imputed. If a man of distinction labours under a slight accusation only, we then treat him with all proper forbearance and respect. But, when he is suspected of a crime of more than ordinary magnitude, that alters the case. The man who has ceased to respect himself, must look for no respect from others.

I was for a moment thunderstruck and speechless. At length fiercely I cried, Produce my accusers!

That is not the mode of proceeding in Constance. I have certain questions to propound to you. When you have answered them, we shall see what is to be done next.

Carry me before the prince-bishop of your city! If I am to be examined further, let it be by your sovereign!

The prince-bishop moved by the state of our affairs in matters of religion, has been prevailed on to delegate his *juridical* authority. I am the person to whom the cognizance of your business belongs; and at certain times,
aided

aided by my assessors, have the power of life and death within this city. You have had every indulgence to which you are entitled, and it will be your wisdom to be no further refractory.

Propose your questions!

A person, apparently greatly advanced in years, arrived in the autumn of last year at a miserable farm you at that time cultivated, called the cottage of the lake. It is to him that my questions will principally relate.

I stood aghast. The words of the magistrate were most unwelcome sounds. I remembered that the stranger had said to me, When I am once buried, speak of me, and, if possible, think of me no more. I replied with eagerness and alarm:

Of that person I have nothing to say. Spare your questions; I have no answer to return you!

What was his name?

I know not.

His country?

I cannot inform you.

It is understood that he died, or in some manner disappeared, while under your protection. Yet in the registers of the church there is no notice of that event. If he died, no application was made for the rites of religion to him dying, or to his body when his spirit had deserted it. You are required to answer, what became of him or his remains?

I have already told you, that from me you will obtain no information.

One question more, sir. Seven years ago, you tell me, you and your family were perishing with hunger. Soon after, you removed from obscure lodgings in this city to the cottage of the lake, and seemed to be laudably employed in earning for yourself a scanty livelihood with the labour of your hands. But within the last six months the scene is wholly changed. You appear to have sud-
denly

denly grown rich, and here, and in other parts of Germany, have actually disbursed considerable sums. Whence comes this change?

The train of questions thus proposed to me, impelled me to a serious reply.

MONSIEUR LE JUGE, said I, I am a stranger, a native of France, and a man of rank in my own country. I have paid your state the compliment of choosing it for my residence. I have expended my industry, I expend my wealth among you. I have comported myself as a peaceable inhabitant. No action of my life has brought scandal upon your state, or disturbed the peace and tranquility of your affairs. I cannot collect from any thing you have said, that I have any accuser, or that any charge has been alleged against me. Till that happens I cannot fall under your animadversion. I am a man of generous birth and honourable sentiments. To myself and my own conscience only am I accountable for my expenditure and my income. I disdain to answer to any tribunal on earth an enquiry of this sort. And now, sir, in conclusion, what I demand of you is, first, my liberty, and secondly, an ample reparation for the interruption I have sustained, and the insults to which I have causelessly been exposed.

You are mistaken, sir, said the magistrate. What you mention may be the rule of administering justice in some states. They may decide, if they think proper, that some open act, apparently of a criminal description, must be alleged against a man before he can become an object of animadversion to the state. But in Constance, as I have already told you, the government assumes to act the part of a parent to its subjects. I sit here, not merely to investigate and examine definite acts, but as a CENSOR MORUM; and I should violate the oath of my office, if I did not lend a vigilant attention to the behaviour and conduct of every one within my jurisdiction.

The

The city of Constance requires that nothing immoral, licentious, or of suspicious character, shall be transacted within its walls. Your proceedings have escaped notice too long; much longer than they would have done but for your late absence. In cases where what is committed is merely immoral or licentious, we content ourselves with sending the offender out of our walls. But your case is of a complicated nature. It has scandalised all the inhabitants of our virtuous and religious city. Unless you answer my enquiries, and give a clear and satisfactory account of your wealth, I am bound to believe that there is something in the business that will not bear the light. The coincidence of times obliges me to connect the disappearance of your guest, and the sudden growth of your fortune. This connection gives rise to the most alarming suspicions. I have therefore to inform you that, unless you honourably clear up these suspicions by the most ample communication my duty directs me to remand you to prison, and to assure you that you will not be liberated thence till you have satisfied the whole of my interrogatories.

Think deliberately, answered I, of your decision before you form it. Your prisons I despise, but I will not suffer my reputation and my honour to be trifled with. I came before you willingly, though I could easily have avoided doing so; because I was eager to clear my fame. I expected accusers, and I knew I could confound accusation. But what is this that you call justice? You put together circumstances in your own mind: you form conjectures; and then, without information, accuser or oath, without the semblance of guilt, you condemn me to prison, and expect to extort from me confession. In defect of articles of charge I disdain to answer; the only return a man of honour should make to loose conjectures and random calumnies, is silence. I am descended from a race of heroes, knights of the cross, and cham-
pions

opions of France; and their blood has not degenerated in my veins. I feel myself animated by the soul of honour, and incapable of crime. I know my innocence, and I rest upon it with confidence. Your vulgar citizens, habituated to none but the groveling notions of traffic and barter, are not the peers of St. Leon, nor able to comprehend the views and sentiments by which he is guided.

You are mighty well-spoken, monsieur St. Leon, replied the magistrate, and your words are big and sounding. But we know that the devil can assume the form of an angel, and that the most infamous and profligate character can pronounce with emphasis sentiments of the purest virtue. You are pleased to decide that the presumptions against you are nothing but caulmnies. Is it nothing that, having received a stranger and retained him with you for months, you endeavoured to conceal this fact, and never suffered him to be seen by a human creature? Is his final disappearance nothing? Is it nothing that, supposing him to be dead, as he probably is, you denied to his remains the rites of funeral, and refuse to tell what is become of the body! Is it nothing that, upon the death of this stranger, you, who were before in a state almost of penury, suddenly appear to be possessed of unbounded riches? Where is the will of this stranger? In what archives have you deposited the declaration of his wealth? Let me tell you, sir, that these presumptions, which you call nothing, form a body of circumstantial evidence that, in many countries, would have led you to the scaffold as a murderer. But the laws of Constance, which you audaciously revile, are the mildest in the universe. Here we never put a man to death but on his own confession. We simply condemn him to perpetual imprisonment, or until he makes a declaration of his guilt. You refuse to declare the name or *country* of the man whom you are suspected of murdering, and then have the assurance to boast that no private

accuser

accuser rises against you. No, sir, we know there can be no private accuser, where the connections of the party can be successfully concealed. But shall this concealment, which is an aggravation of the murder, prove its security? In conclusion you boast of your blood and heroic sentiments, and rail at our citizens as shopkeepers and merchants. Let me tell you, sir, shopkeepers and merchants though we are, we should scorn to conduct ourselves in the obscure and suspicious manner that you have done. And, now I have taken the trouble to refute your flimsy pretences, which it was wholly unnecessary for me to do, I have done with you. You know your destination, unless you are prepared immediately to give a satisfactory account of yourself and your proceedings.

Finding it impossible to make on this man the impression I desired, I declined entering into further parley; and, telling him that I should convey a representation of my case to my native sovereign, and did not doubt soon to make him feel the rashness of his proceeding, I withdrew, in the custody of the officers who had conducted me to the scene of audience. I was, I confess, struck with the coincidence of circumstances, which the magistrate had placed in a light equally unexpected and forcible, which I now saw calculated to expose me to the most injurious suspicions. I was not disposed in the smallest degree to yield to the attack, but I felt a desire to act deliberately and with caution. The whole of what I had heard was utterly unforeseen, and it was with peculiar anguish that I became aware of this new consequence of the stranger's pernicious donation. This was a consequence that no resignation, no abjuration of his bequests could cure; and that must be stood up to with manly courage, if any hope were entertained of averting it.

CHAP. XXI.

THE appearance of wealth that accompanied me had by this time made its impression upon my keepers; and one of them now informed me, that monsieur Monloc, an agent of the court of France, who was making a tour of several of the German states by order of his sovereign, had arrived the night before at the city of Constance. There was no representative of my country regularly resident here, and I immediately felt the presence of Monloc to be the most fortunate event that could have occurred for effecting my honourable deliverance. Selfishness and avarice, it may be thought, would rather have impelled the persons who had me in custody, to conceal from me a circumstance calculated to deprive them of an advantageous prey. But in those groveling souls from whom riches never fail to extort homage, however strange it may seem, the homage often appears disinterested. They pay it by a sort of irresistible instinct; and, admiring what they covet, at an awful distance, with difficulty assume the courage to pollute their worship with ideas of calculation and gain.

I immediately addressed a memorial to this gallant soldier, with whose person indeed I was unacquainted, but the fame of whose spirit and enterprise had not failed to have reached me. I represented to him that I was a Frenchman of family and distinction; that I had been seized upon and was retained in prison by the magistrates here, without accuser or the hope of a trial; that I had not been guilty of the shadow of a crime; and that I knew the benignity and courage of my sovereign would never permit a subject of France to languish under calumny and oppression in a foreign country. I added, that he would do an acceptable service to king Francis, to whom I had the honour to be known, by interfering in my favour; and therefore intreated him to obtain for

me

me immediate justice and deliverance. Monluc returned me an answer by the bearer of my memorial, assuring me that he would lose no time in enquiring into the merits of my case, and that I might depend upon receiving every assistance from him that a man of honour could desire.

The warmth and frankness of this answer filled me with hope, for there was no deliverance from my present situation that I could contemplate with satisfaction, but such a one as should be accompanied with reparation and éclat. Three days however elapsed before I heard again from the French envoy. On the morning of the fourth he announced his intention of visiting me; and, about an hour after, arrived at the prison. His appearance was striking. He was tall, slender, and well made, with a freedom of carriage, not derived from the polish of courts, but which appeared to flow from the manliness and active energies of his mind. His hair and complexion were dark; the former, though he was still young, rather scantily shaded a high and ample forehead. His features were expressive of the sanguine and adust temper of his mind, and, though his eye was animated, his countenance, as he entered, struck me as particularly solemn.

You are the count de St. Leon? said he.

I am.

You sent me a memorial a few days ago complaining of the tribunal of this city: I am afraid, sir, I can do nothing for you.

My countenance fell as he spoke; I gasped for breath. I had conceived a most favourable anticipation as he entered, and my disappointment was particularly cruel. I had said in my heart, This is the very man to rescue my injured fame.

I see, sir, you are disappointed, resumed he. I have not given up the affair: if I had, this visit, which I design as a mark of my attention, would be an insult. The

moment I received your memorial, I paid the utmost regard to it. If the affair were as you represented it, I knew I could not do any thing more acceptable to my sovereign than interfere in your behalf. I have spent the whole interval in investigating the case. I have seen the magistrate who committed you; I have visited the spot where your crime is alleged to have been perpetrated; I have had an interview with your wife.

Well, sir, cried I, alarmed and impatient—well, sir, and the result?

Appearances are uncommonly strong against you: they can scarcely be stronger. But you have a right to be heard; it is for the sake of discharging that last act of justice that you see me this morning.

Great God! exclaimed I, overwhelmed with chagrin, is it possible that my countryman, the man to whom I was proud and happy to appeal, the gallant Monluc, should believe me a murderer? I swear by every thing that is sacred, by the blood of him that died for me on the cross, and by my eternal salvation, that I am as innocent as the child unborn!

I am glad to hear you express yourself with this emphasis and fervour. I cannot but say that to my own feelings it has great weight. But I must not suffer myself as a man, and still less in the public capacity in which I stand, to be overcome and confounded by your asseverations. There is a connected and most unfavourable story against you: this it is incumbent on you to clear up.

And you say, you have seen my wife? I was distracted and overwhelmed by Monluc's way of putting the question. I was divided between my anxiety to be justified, and the solemn mystery of the affair to which his enquiries led; and I probably spoke thus from an unconscious desire to gain time.

Yes

Yes, that is another presumption in your favour. Madame de St. Leon is perhaps the most striking and extraordinary woman I ever saw. Of the husband of such a woman, especially when he appeared to be the object of her attachment, I should be always inclined to think well. Madame de St. Leon pleaded for you with earnestness and affection. But, amidst all her ardour, I could perceive that she felt there was something mysterious and unpleasant in the affair, that she was unable to develop.

As Monluc spoke, I saw that I had failed in one of the main anchors of my hope. I thought that no one could have talked with my beloved Marguerite, and have left her with the opinion that I was a murderer. How did this happen? Was she lukewarm and unfaithful in my vindication?

What she, continued my countryman, I could see, was not only unable to explain, but did not fully understand, it is you alone can clear; the concealment of the stranger, his disappearance, what became of the body, and your own sudden transition from poverty to wealth.

I was by this time fully sensible of the nature of my situation. I summoned my fortitude; I felt that I had no longer any hope but in the dignity of innocence.

You call on me for explanation, replied I. Can you not conceive, gallant Monluc, that I may be able to resolve your doubts, and yet that I will not? Explanation is not the business of a man of honour. He cannot stoop to it. He will win the applause and approbation of mankind, if won, in silence. He will hold on the even course of a generous spirit, and turn neither to the right nor to the left, to court the suffrage, or deprecate the condemnation of a giddy multitude. Such, my brave countryman, have been the maxims of my past life, such will be the maxims of my future.

I admire

I admire, answered Monluc, at least the gallantry of these sentiments, though I may be inclined to doubt their prudence. But, if such is your determination, permit me to say, you have no concern with me. He who resolutely withholds explanation, must arm himself with patience, and either wait the operation of time, or rest satisfied with the consciousness of his innocence.

And is that all? Will there not be some noble spirits, who, separating themselves from the herd, will judge of him by what they feel in their own breasts, and be drawn to him with an irresistible impulse? Was it not natural that I should expect Monluc to be one of these? It would be hard indeed, if he who disdains to temporise with popularity, and to vindicate himself from the ungenerous constructions of sordid minds, should not by that very proceeding secure the friendship and sympathy of those whose friendship it will be most grateful to him to possess.

The friends of an innocent man, whom a combination of circumstances has exposed to the most painful suspicions, must always be few. He can scarcely expect the acquittal and sympathy of a stranger. I must know, I must have felt and observed in a man a thousand virtues, before I can be entitled to treat accumulated presumptions against him as nothing.

And thus then are to end my hopes in Monluc? He does not feel that I am innocent? He does not recognise in me the countenance, the voice, the turn of thought, of a brother, a man no less incapable than himself of every thing disgraceful and ignominious? Be it so! I will, as you advise me, rest upon the consciousness of my innocence. A Frenchman, the descendant of illustrious ancestors, long an exile, long the victim of adversity, but at all times conscious of the purity of my sentiments and *the integrity* of my conduct, I will not suffer myself to
be

be overwhelmed with this last desertion, this ultimate refusal of justice!

Count de St. Leon! your appeal is full of energy. In whatever way I decide, it will leave an unpleasant sensation in my breast. Let us suppose that, as a private man, I could take you to my arms, and dismiss every unfavourable appearance from my mind. You must remember that I am here as a public character, and that only as a public character am I capable of affording you assistance. Thus situated, I am bound to resist the impulses of a romantic and irregular confidence, and to do nothing of which I shall not be able to render a clear and intelligible account.

Let us not part thus! It is not the vindication of your character to the world, with which we are at present concerned. It is only necessary that you should furnish a sufficient ground to justify me to myself for interfering in your behalf. Explain to me the particulars of your case, in confidence if you will, but fully and without reserve. I will not abuse your confidence. I will make no use of your communication, but such as you shall yourself approve. Only enable me to have a reason for acting, that is not merely capable of being felt, but that I may know is in its own nature capable of being stated to another. It is upon me that you call to take certain measures; you must enable me to judge of their propriety.

You are mistaken when you suppose the appearances against you to be slight. It is not a slight circumstance; that you profess to be ignorant of, or have refused to disclose, the country, the connections, and even the name of the stranger whom you so anxiously concealed. The disappearance of his body is still more extraordinary. What intelligible motive, except a guilty one, can I assign for that? But your sudden wealth immediately after this disappearance, is especially material. It is a
broad

broad and glaring fact that men cannot shut their eyes on, if they would. The chain and combination of events, that proceeds systematically from link to link, is the criterion of guilt and the protector of reputation. Your case, as it now stands, is scarcely to be termed equivocal: upon the supposition of your criminality all is plain and easy to be accounted for; upon any other supposition it appears an inscrutable mystery. Place but the balance even; present to me an exposition of these facts, that shall make your innocence not less probable than your guilt; and, as I feel myself interested for you and your family, and as the presumption, when matters are doubtful, ought always to be on the favourable side, I consent to be your friend!

How unfortunate, I exclaimed, am I doomed to be! Your proposal is liberal and generous; but I must refuse it! My story is an unhappy one: particulars have been reposed in my fidelity, which I am not at liberty to communicate, but which, if communicated, you would not regard as dishonourable. I may be made the martyr of infamy, and the abhorrence of my species; I can endure adversity and anguish; I can die; but that which you demand from me, never can be confided to any mortal ear!

As you please, rejoined Monluc. The secrets of a dead man, to be preserved after his death, and that to the ruin of him who is their depository, must, I believe, be villainous secrets; and the secret of a villain no one is bound to observe. You must further give me leave to tell you that, whatever a high-strained sense of honor might dictate in that point, the fortune you possess is your own affair, and to dissipate or not the mystery which hangs upon that is wholly at your discretion. But I have already advanced as far, perhaps further than circumstances or propriety could justify, and there can now be no more parley between us.

Monluc,

Monluc, cried I, I submit ! However harsh your decision is as towards me, however painful and unfortunate its consequences, I will admit it to be that which duty prescribes to you. I struggle, I contend no further. One thing only I would willingly obtain of you, that you would interpose your influence to obtain for me the society and intercourse of my family. The transaction of this day will then be remembered by me with respect towards you, and a melancholy regret that I could not entitle myself to your esteem. I shall recollect with pleasure that I owe something to the generosity of Monluc.

Incredible pertinacity ! exclaimed my visitor with a voice of perplexity and astonishment. What am I to conceive of you ? Under what appearance shall I consider you in the records of my memory ? Your silence is the indication of guilt, and in that indication I ought to acquiesce. Yet the fortitude of your manner, and something, I know not what, of emotion, that your manner produces in my own bosom, would fain persuade me you are innocent. Why will you leave me a prey to this contention of thought ? If all men, constituted as I am, were to feel in you, as it were, the magnetism of innocence, shame, the simple inference of understanding, and the general sense of mankind, would oblige them to treat you as guilty. What I can, however, be assured I will cheerfully do for you. I cannot deliver you from prison, but I will not fail to obtain the mitigation you ask. Farewel !

Such was the issue of my interview with Monluc. It was clear that my reputation was wounded beyond the power of remedy. While the question had only been of a magistrate, haughty, supercilious, insolent and unfeeling, I flattered myself that the harshness of the conclusions that were drawn, might be ascribed to the depravity of his character. - But Monluc was the re-
verse

venge of this man. He was not less generous and heroic, than the magistrate was gross and illiberal. His desire to relieve me was not less apparent, than the magistrate's eagerness to oppress. Yet his conclusion was the same, and was felt by me so much the more bitterly, in proportion to the humanity, the kindness, the intrepidity, and the virtue of the man from whom it flowed. Virtue and vice, barbarism and refinement, were equally engaged in the concert against me, and there was no chance I should triumph in a contention with so many enemies.

I might now be said to have reached the end of my adventure: I had closed one grand experiment upon the donation of the stranger. What had it produced to me? Not one atom of the benefits I anticipated; not a particle of those advantages which a little while ago had made the intoxication of my waking dreams. Its fruits had been distasteful and loathsome. Whether I looked to my person, my family, or my fame, I had felt in all the miserable effects of this treacherous and delusive gift. My person was shut up in prison; and I was now to make an experiment whether, by clandestine and secret proceedings, wealth could restore to me the liberty of which wealth had deprived me. My family was blasted, my wife was struck to the heart, and no mortal skill could restore the wound she had suffered; my son was gone unaided into voluntary exile, that he might shun the contagion of my follies; what was I to do with the poor remains of my house, forlorn, dejected, and wretched? The wound my good name had received, was of the most decisive species. When I first encountered contumely at Dresden, and was called on for explanation by Coligny, the difficulties of my condition struck anguish to my soul. But what were they, compared with what had now overtaken me? I was charged with robbery and murder, with every thing that combines the whole species against

the perpetrator, and determines them without sense of compunction to extirpate him from the face of the earth. Perhaps it was only by the courtesy of the laws of this state, that I was permitted my choice between an ignominious death and perpetual imprisonment. I might possibly indeed escape from my confinement ; I might pass into a distant country ; I might be fortunate enough to cut off all connection between my past and my future life, and thus enter upon a new career. But this to a man of honourable mind is a miserable expedient. With what feelings does he recollect, that there is a spot where his name is abhorred, where a story is told against him to excite the wonder of the ignorant and the torpid feelings of the sluggish soul, a story to darken with new infamy the records of guilt, and to infect the imagination of the solitary man with nameless horrors ? To be the theme of such a tale is no common evil. No matter how far the man to whom it relates, shall remove from the detested spot ; the spot itself, with all its chain of circumstances, will often recur ; the voices that repulsed and humbled him, will ring in his ear ; the degraded figure he made, will rise for ever fresh with his imagination. He cannot ascend to any free and lofty sentiment ; he cannot attain the healthful tone of unblemished virtue ; wherever he goes, he carries the arrow of disgrace in his bosom, and, when he would erect his head on high, it reminds him of the past, and stings him to the heart.

If the consciousness of all this would have been painful to any other man, what was it to me, who had been brought up from my infancy in the opinion that fame was the first of all human possessions, and to whom honour and an unimpeached integrity had ever been more necessary than my daily food, or than the life which that food supported ? What would I not have given, could I have returned to the situation in which the inauspicious

cious arrival of the stranger had found me ? But that was impossible. If all that I had recently passed through could but have proved a dream, if I could have awaked and freed myself from the phantoms of this horrible vision, how happy beyond all names of happiness should I by such an event have been made ? What a lesson would it have taught me of the emptiness and futility of human wishes ? What a sovereign contempt would it have impressed upon me for wealth and all its train of ostentation ? How profound a feeling of contentment with humble circumstances and a narrow station would it have produced in my mind ? Alas, the conception of those advantages and that peace was the illusion, and not the evils I had sustained, and from which I could not escape.

CHAP. XXII.

MEANWHILE it was necessary that I should make the best of the present circumstances. My heart was wounded ; my spirit was in a manner broken ; but not so utterly withered and destroyed, as to make me rest supine in perpetual imprisonment. I felt, with equal conviction and pungency, that my character and my happiness had sustained the deepest injuries ; but I felt it incumbent on me to collect and improve the fragments that remained. For some days indeed after the conference with Monluc, I was sunk in the deepest dejection. But, as that dejection subsided, I began to turn a steady attention upon the future. I recollected that an eternal and inexhaustible gift deserved to be made the subject of more than one experiment, before a decision was formed upon its merits. I shall become wiser, said I, as I go forward. Experience, however bitter, will teach me sagacity

sagacity and discrimination. My next experiment shall be made with more prudence and a soberer gradation. I will remove to some distant country, where the disadvantages of my past adventures shall not follow me. I will take a new name. I shall then enjoy the benefit of a tyro just entering a scene, to all the personages of which he is wholly unknown. I shall be like a serpent that has stripped its tarnished and wrinkled skin, and comes forth in all the gloss and sleekness of youth. Surely, in an unknown land, with the prejudice of wealth in my favour, and no prejudices against me, I shall know how to conduct myself so as to obtain honour and respect. It is impossible that inexhaustible wealth and immortal youth, gifts so earnestly coveted by every creature that lives, gifts which if I were known to possess, my whole species from the mere impulses of envy would probably combine to murder me, as not able to endure the sight of one so elevated above his brethren,—it is impossible that such gifts should not be pregnant with variety of joy.

Marguerite greatly contributed to raise me from the dejection, into which my imprisonment and the conference of Monluc had sunk me. She was my better genius. I had been so accustomed to receive consolation from her lips in the most trying circumstances, that now the very sound of her voice was able to smooth my wrinkled brow, and calm my agitated spirit. I listened as to the sound of an angelic lyre; I was all ear; I drank in the accents of her tongue; and, in the dear delight, my cares were hushed, and my sorrows at an end. She talked to me of her daughters, whom she represented as about to have no protector but their father; she urged me to watch over them, and to take such steps as should most conduce to their future virtue and happiness; she pointed out the practicability of escape, and recommended to me to fly to some distant country: the dreams of future
prosperity

prosperity from the gifts of the stranger were not hers; they were all my own. It was inexpressibly affecting at this time to receive consolation from her, who had no consolation in her own breast, who had bid farewell to all the gay attractions of the world, and talked familiarly of her death as a thing certain to happen in no very long time. She had lost the purest gratifications of the domestic scene; she had lost her son; her heart was broken; yet with her dying accents she sought to dispel retrospect, and inspire cheerfulness, in the breast of her husband.

The reader may perhaps imagine that I was something too sanguine, when surrounded with jailors, and all the precautions of a prison, I planned the nature and scene of my next residence exactly as if I had been a person at large. But I took it for granted that the power of money I possessed would easily unlock to me the gates of my captivity. I believed that, upon the lowest calculation, personal liberty was clearly included among the gifts of the stranger. Impressed with this opinion, I fixed upon a negro, a servant of the prison, and who had the keys of my apartment, as the subject of my pecuniary experiment. The idea of applying to him had perhaps first occurred to me, from the mere circumstance of my seeing him more frequently than any other attendant of the prison. When I thought further of the matter, I judged, from the meanness of his rank and his apparent poverty, that I could not have chosen better. So far as related to the sum to be paid as the price of my liberty, it was indeed indifferent to me, whether it were large or small. I had however suffered so much from the inconsiderate lavishing of wealth, that I had no inclination on the present occasion to make ostentation of more than was necessary. But, what was of most importance to me, I was desirous that my first experiment should be a successful one. Though not unaware of the power of gold,

gold, I conceived that, among persons of middle rank and easier circumstance, there might be varieties of disposition, and I might be mistaken in my choice. Some might have the whim of integrity, or might place a sturdy sort of pride in showing that they were content with what they had, and were too high for a bribe. There might be persons who, though of plebian rank, might value reputation as much as ever I had done, and be of opinion that no advance of station could compensate for the name or the consciousness of dishonour. These distinctions may seem an idle and superfluous refinement, when it is considered that I had the power of raising my bribe to the level of any man's honesty or pride be it as great as it might; and it may be thought that my offer might be so increased, as to be too dazzling for mortal firmness to resist. Be that as it will, I am merely stating the reflections that passed through my mind, not entering into their vindication.

Taking the first opportunity then of accosting this man when he was alone with me, I addressed him thus:

My good friend are not you poor?

Yes, sir.

Would not you readily do me a kindness?

If my master give me leave, I will.

You mistake me. Would you be my friend?

I do not know what you mean, sir. I have been used to call the man I love, my friend. If you mean that, you know I cannot choose whether I will be a man's friend; it comes of itself.

Can I not make you my friend?

That is, make me love you?

I was surprised at the propriety of his answers. I am unable at this distance of time to recal the defects of his language: and I disdain the mimic toil of inventing a jargon for him suitable to the lowness of his condition: the sense of what he said I faithfully report. I had be-
fore

fore been struck with a certain correctness of thinking in him ; but I now examined his countenance more attentively than I had ever before done, and thought I could distinctly trace in it the indications of a sound understanding and an excellent heart.

I do not know, sir, continued he. If I see that you are a good man, I believe I shall love you. But if it happened that you were good and generous to me, I am sure I should love you very much.

You are very poor?

So they tell me. I never had more than a shilling or two at a time in my life.

It is a very sad thing to be poor?

Why yes, so I have heard, sir. But, for my own part, I am always merry and gay.

My good fellow, I will make you rich.

Thank you, sir! But what good will that do me?

You are a servant: I will make you a master of servants.

Now, that I should not like at all. I am merry, because I am light-hearted. If I had money, and property to take care of, and servants to direct, I am afraid they would make me grave and suspicious, and in every respect unlike what you see me.

Is it possible you should be pleased with your present situation, under the orders of one man in a house, and obliged to play the tyrant to the rest?

Why, as you say, sir, there may be more agreeable situations than the life of a jail. But, as to being under orders, I have no objection to that. I never knew any other condition, and therefore I am contented. It is not pleasant indeed to eave a master who is always scolding and dissatisfied; but the gentleman I serve at present is reasonable; I know how to content him, and, when I have done that, he leaves me to please myself. You offer me money: now, sir, that is not what I call being generous;
I count

I count nothing for much, except when a man shows me he has bowels, and convinces me that he thinks justice due even to a negro. I dare say, however you designed it for generosity, and expected something from me in return. Tell me what it is you want, and whatever I can do with propriety, you may depend on it I will.

Do you approve of a man's being deprived of his liberty?

Will you please to tell me what you mean by liberty? You offered me just now what you call liberty and independence; and I am content to be a servant.

Would you be pleased, instead of being a turnkey, to have the key turned on yourself?

That I should not. I understand the disagreeableness of that well enough, for when I first entered this place, it was as a prisoner.

If then, my good fellow, you were convinced that I was a man disposed to be generous to you in your own way, and to deserve your attachment and love, surely you would not refuse to deliver me from a situation which you have yourself felt to be so disagreeable and calamitous.

I understand you now, sir. I have already a master, with whom I am satisfied, and I do not wish to change my service. When I was prisoner, he found out that I was innocent; he got me cleared, and gave me employment. I am put here for the express purpose of seeing the prisoners in safe custody. That is the contract between me and my master. When I took the keys, by that action I pledged myself to be faithful to my trust; and the nobleness of my master's behaviour to me in removing me from being a prisoner to be a free servant, is a double bond upon my fidelity. I would sooner consent to be torn limb from limb, than fail in what is expected from me. You may be generous to a harmless
stranger;

stranger ; you have most reason to be generous to a man you love ; but if you would heap benefits upon me merely because I proved myself a villain, I can only say, it would be disgraceful to be the object of your favour.

Thus saying, he quitted me, and withdrew from further parley. The conversation in which we had engaged, though I had had considerable experience in the world, was altogether new to me, and overwhelmed me with astonishment. I found in this trial, that the power of money was subject to limitations, of which previously I had not been in the slightest degree aware. I thought that nothing but the most extraordinary degree of resolution and self-denial could enable a man to resist its enticements ; and I had even been told, though I did not believe, that every man had his price, and a bribe capable of indefinite augmentation must be in all cases victorious. Yet here was a poor creature utterly exempt from its operation. He had no sense of those attractions, which so often degrade the best, and convert virtue into the most shameless profligacy. It cost him no effort to be honest, and he uttered sentiments that would have given lustre to the most heroic character, without any consciousness of their greatness. What I had seen, led me also to reflect on another singularity I discerned in him. In the midst of the admirable, I had almost said the sublime, integrity he discovered, (for is it not a criterion of the sublime to be great without an effort ?) he was destitute of knowledge, of intellectual cultivation, and all those exquisite sensations that most distinguish the man from the brute. He passed on quietly in the road of ordinary life, and thought not of the ambition to be wise or great, to be honoured by thousands, or a benefactor to ages yet unborn. Kings might have confessed their inferiority to this man. But is he to be regarded as the model of what a human creature should be wished to be ? Oh, no !

But

But the most memorable feeling impressed upon me by this conversation, was a conviction of what I had been backward to confess, that knaves were the persons to whose assistance and concert I must look, and that I must be upon my guard against an honest man. No one was qualified to be my coadjutor, till he had proved himself unworthy of all just and honourable society. The friend I must seek, was a man whose very soul melted at a bribe, whom money would seduce to perpetrate whatever his judgment most abhorred. Honour and integrity in the most refined and the rudest state, Monluc and the negro both refused. It is impossible to conceive a sensation more painful and humiliating, than was this conviction to my mind.

I was not long at leisure for these reflections. In a few minutes the master of the prison entered my apartment, and with him the negro whom I had endeavoured to prevail on to assist in restoring me to liberty. The master began to reproach me in very harsh terms for attempting to seduce his servant from his duty, and asked me what sort of enjoyment or satisfaction a man could have in life, if he could not depend upon the people he put into his employment? To this I answered with sternness, that I should hold no debate about right and wrong with a jailor; that he might depend upon it I would leave no stone unturned to set myself free, and what was more, that I would be free; and that, for his part, it was his business to keep me if he could, but not to insult me. I therefore insisted upon his quitting the room.

What use, replied the fellow, do you think now there is in putting yourself in a passion? If I have not a right to speak to you, I know what I have a right to do; put you in the strong room, and load you with irons.

I turned my back upon him. And how came you, said I to the negro, to go and betray me? I should have

have expected better things of you. If you refused to serve me, at least you needed not have endeavoured to hurt me.

I did nothing but my duty, sir. I have no wish to hurt you : but it is my business, not merely to take care of my master's interests myself, but to see that they are not injured by any body else. If he was not put on his guard, you might have been more successful with the next turnkey you endeavoured to bribe.

You will find it more your interest, monsieur, interposed the jailor, to talk to me than to my servant. You are determined to be free, you say. If that is the case, and it is to happen, who has so good a right to benefit by your resolution as I have?

My eyes were opened in a moment. I saw that the knave whose rigour and sternness could not hold out against the warmth of a bribe, the friend of whose assistance I was in want, stood before me.

I do not wonder proceeded he, that you preferred applying to one of my servants. Their honesty must be expected to be had at a cheaper market. But, for my part, I am determined no man shall ever pass these walls, without my being the richer. If then your escape is a thing that must happen, let us see what you can afford to give me for it.

Dear master, interposed the negro, you surely will not listen to the gentleman's offer. When I refused to betray my trust, it is impossible you should consent to betray yours?

Hold your tongue, blockhead ! said the other. Do not you see that monsieur is determined to escape ? I know he is rich. Though you have refused a bribe, I am sure that all your fellows will not. The thing will happen sooner or later in spite of every thing I can do ; and there can be no harm in my helping to bring about, what it is impossible I should prevent.

A morality

A morality like this seems exactly in its place in the breast of a jailor. We had already made some progress in adjusting the terms of our contract, when the keeper of the prison interposed.

But, monsieur, you will please to remark, that this is an affair which will be attended with difficulty. Whatever passes between you and me must be a secret. Your escape will be a thing open and notorious, and you must have a confederate, that I may not bear the blame of it. You must therefore take my black here along with you, that his flight may cause all the blame to fall upon him.

Oh, pray, master, said the negro, do not part with me! I love you, and will do any thing in the world, if you will let me stay. You saved my life for ought I know; and made a man of me again; you cannot think what good it does me to serve a master that has been so kind to me!

Get you gone! replied his owner. You are of no use to me; you are not fit for a jail; you are so simple, I cannot tell what to do with you!

Indeed I do not like to go with this gentleman; it will break my heart. He said, he would be generous and kind to me, if I turned a villain; I shall never be able, and shall never desire to earn his kindness: but you rewarded me, because I was innocent. He said, he would make a master of me; and I am better as I am; I had much rather be a servant.

The difficulties of this poor fellow were soon silenced by the peremptoriness of his master. The jailor told him, that he would do him a great service, by thus giving his master an opportunity of representing him as the traitor; and, with this consideration, the negro dried his tears, and with a reluctant heart consented to accompany me. Thus were his exemplary fidelity and affection rewarded! So little do some men seem capable of feeling the value of attachment! The character of a master was a singu-

lar one. The meanness and mercenariness of his spirit were unredeemed by a single virtue. He was avarice personified. But he had found or imagined an interest in taking this negro, who had been wantonly thrown into prison by a former tyrant, for his servant; and this the poor fellow, in the simplicity of his heart, had mistaken for an act of exalted generosity. His avarice had swallowed up all his other passions; and his servants had neither impatience nor insolence to encounter from him: weighed therefore in the balance of the negro's experience, he appeared a miracle of mildness and benevolence.

Our bargain was at length concluded; and, the next time Marguerite came to visit me, I announced to her the success of my negotiation. Before we parted, we sent for the jailor, and discussed with him the road I should take. My purpose was to pass into Italy; and Marguerite undertook by midnight to have every thing prepared to convey us to the foot of the mountains. This point being adjusted, the keeper of the prison left us; and, tenderly embracing Marguerite, I besought her to congratulate me upon the recovery of my liberty. She had heard however of the infamous nature of the charge against me, and, though she yielded it no credit, I could easily perceive that it rendered yet heavier the depression under which she laboured. She returned my embrace; the tears stole down her cheeks; but she was silent. I endeavoured to divert her thoughts and reanimate her spirits, by hinting at the new scenes before us, and the distant country to which we were about to remove; but in-vain. I will not reproach you, Reginald! said she; I will not desert my duty while I have power to perform it; you may depend upon my doing every thing I am able both for the children and yourself!

She left me in a very melancholy frame of mind. I had not expected to see her thus languid and disconsolate; and upon the eve of my liberation, I felt it like caprice.

price. Incomparable woman ! She was incapable of giving intentional pain : but, with her exquisitely susceptible mind, she was unable to support the dreadful reverse in which I had involved her, or even at times to assume the gestures of cheerfulness and tranquility ; gestures that, at the best, but ill disguised the grief within !

I was busily reflecting on what had just occurred, when the keeper of the prison re-entered my apartment. I am come, monsieur, said he, to take my leave of you. As I do not at all intend to lose my place, it is not proper that I should see you any more. You understand me ?

Two days had already elapsed since the conclusion of our contract, and I had provided myself for this and such other demands as seemed likely to be immediately impending. I should have preferred indeed to have delayed this payment till the moment of my departure : but what the jailor suggested, appeared reasonable ; and I could not assign, even to my own mind, any cause why I would be reluctant to comply with it. I paid to this wretch the price of his villainy.

I now began to count the hours, and eagerly to anticipate the arrival of midnight. Though the moment of my liberty was so near, I yet contemplated with unspeakable loathing the scene of my confinement, which was associated with the deepest disgrace and the blackest charges that are incident to a human creature. I felt as if, in proportion as I removed from the hated spot, I should at least shake off a part of the burthen that oppressed me, and grow comparatively young again.

Time was far from moving indeed with the rapidity my impatience required ; but the hour of appointment at last was near, and I expected every moment the faithful negro to appear, and announce to me my freedom. The cathedral bell now sounded twelve ; I heard the noise of steps along the gallery ; and presently a key
was

was applied to the door of my apartment. It opened ; and three persons, whom I knew for servants of the prison, entered.

Come, sir, said one of them ; you must follow me.

Where is my friend, the negro ? said I.

Ask no questions ; speak never a word ; but come.

It was strange, that the master of the prison, whose temper was so full of anxiety and caution, should unnecessarily trust three of his people, who might easily have been kept ignorant of this hazardous secret ! This circumstance, however, did not strike me at first so strongly as it ought to have done. I had perfect confidence in his fidelity to his profligate bargain, and expected every moment to meet the negro who was to be my guide. My conductors led me by a way which I soon perceived did not lead to the ordinary entrance of the prison.

Where are we going ? said I.

Hold your tongue, or you will spoil all ; replied one of them roughly.

I bethought me that there might be an objection to the dismissing me by the public gate ; I recollected to have heard that there were several subterranean outlets to the citadel ; I judged from words that I had just heard that my conductors were acquainted with the plan that had been formed ; and for all these reasons I proceeded with tolerable ease and security. I was not much longer, however, permitted to doubt. I was conducted to one of the dungeons of the prison, and told that there I was to remain. At first I remonstrated loudly, and told them that I had been promised my liberty, and not a treatment like this.

We know that, sir, replied they, and that is the reason you are brought here. It is our business to teach you that the greatest offence that can be committed by a *man in prison*, is to attempt to escape.

The

The shock and surprise, that so unexpected an issue to my adventure produced, rendered me outrageous. I was no longer able to control my fury ; and, without knowing what I proposed, I knocked down two of my attendants before they had an opportunity to secure me, and rushed up the flight of steps by which we had descended. The third, however, contrived to intercept me ; and, while we struggled, the other two came to his assistance. They loaded me with fetters and chained me to the wall. I was then left in utter darkness.

I felt myself sore with the bruises I had received in the contest ; but what was infinitely worse, I found the expectations of freedom I had so confidently entertained, baffled and disappointed. Marguerite and my children were at this moment waiting for me to join them. They would probably wait hour after hour in vain. To what cause would they attribute my failing of my appointment ? To what cause was I myself to attribute my miscarriage ? My hopes in this instance had been in the utmost degree sanguine ; what was I to count upon for the future ? Was money useless in every instance in which mankind agreed to think its power unquestionable ? What was the source of the present catastrophe and the harsh treatment I endured ? Was the keeper of the prison discovered, and dismissed from his office ? Had the negro gone and given information against him ? I formed a thousand conjectures as to what might have happened ; but I was unable to rest in any.

I had remained about twelve hours in this situation, full of angry and disconsolate thoughts, when the principal jailor entered my dungeon. I looked at him with astonishment ; the cloud vanished from my understanding, and I began to comprehend the solution of the enigma.

Are you at large ? cried I with indignation. Why then am I here ?

You are here by my orders.

Execrable villain ! said I. Did you not promise me my freedom ? Have you not received the price of it ? How dare you show yourself in my presence ? As I spoke, I shook my chains, I clenched my fists, I trembled with resentment and rage.

If you are not perfectly quiet and reasonable, said he, I shall leave you to your fate, and return no more.

Nothing is more singular in a state of great mental effervescence than the rapidity with which our ideas succeed each other. At such times we seem to think more in minutes than at other times in hours. I felt how miserable a slave a man is, the moment he falls completely into the power of another. The wretch who stood before me was more vacant of human affections, than any one I ever saw. Yet I was his creature, to be moulded as he pleased. A thousand injuries he could inflict upon me, for which neither the institutions of society, nor the extraordinary endowments I derived from the stranger, could afford a remedy. He might so torture my mind and baffle my wishes, as to kill in me every spark of lofty adventure and generous pride. My liberty might for aught I knew, be for years at his disposal. I felt however that my best course was to regard him with contempt, and to use him as I would a spade or a file, to execute my purposes, without suffering him to waken my passions. I immediately grew more calm, and he perceived the revolution of my sentiments.

You seem to wonder, continued he, that I did not keep my engagement with you ? I pride myself upon being superior to the prejudices, by which other men are frightened, like children with a bugbear, I have therefore no rule but my interest ; and I did not see how my interest bound me to keep my engagement with you.

And

And what became of the countess?

I neither know nor care. I suppose she staid all night under the walls; I knew she durst not disturb the prison.

I felt I had still emotions to suppress. I curbed my my tongue, but they showed themselves in my eyes.

How do you intend to dispose of me?

Keep you in close custody. I have got your thousand pounds; the next thing for me to take care of is that I do not lose my place.

And for what purpose do you come to me now?

Why to tell you a secret, I am not quite determined what conduct to pursue, and therefore I came here that I might have a better opportunity of judging.

Are you not afraid that I should inform the government how you have cheated me?

You inform! Have not I got you under lock and key? I warrant you, I will take care what goes out of these walls to the government.

The countess has a license to visit me.

What care I for that? I can keep her at bay as long as I will. She will not easily go to the government; and she is not such a fool as not to know, that to lodge a complaint against me, is not the way to procure the liberty of a man condemned to perpetual imprisonment. I can at any time trump up a story of your attempting to corrupt the turnkeys, and be sure, when I do, I will not want for proofs. That will cover any thing I can do to annoy you, and answer any accusation you can make against me. Do you think that the word of a jailor will not be taken, before that of the murderer he has in custody?

I can bring your own servants as witnesses, three of whom assaulted me last night.

Dunce, do you think I trusted them with my secret? They have nothing to tell, and apprehend nothing but a

plot between you and my black, who has been put into the penitentiary for his offence. He is my only confidant; and I trust him, because his stupidity answers to me for his faith.

Suppose I were to double the bribe for which you sold me my liberty, what security should I have that you would abide by your bargain?

Oh, if you were to do that, it would alter the case.

Might you not then detain the money, and defy me, as you have done now?

Suppose that a thing which might happen; can you help yourself? can you do better?

I saw there was no remedy, and I was constrained to allow this two-fold perfidy. It was with an ill grace, and an attempt at sullenness and indifference, that the jailor accepted my proposal. The second thousand however had irresistible charms; and, in spite of himself, the sensation that made his heart dance, relaxed his muscles, and played about his mouth. He was puzzled what to think of me. The facility with which I produced the sums he demanded, with less apparent effort than they might have come from a duke or a sovereign prince, startled and staggered him. He had still his qualms, and evidently doubted whether he should not raise his price a third time. I saw no safety but in pertinacity and firmness, and had the good fortune ultimately to check his doubtful, half-formed experiments.

I was led by the accidents which have just been related, into further and deeper reflections on the power of money, as well as on the nature of the situation in which I found myself placed by the legacy of the stranger. My present experiment had been made upon a subject apparently the most favourable that could have been devised, upon a man whose breast the love of gold occupied without a rival: yet with this man I very hardly succeeded.

I was

and indeed so blinded by the present dejection of and sickness of my heart, as to imagine that I had been game with this base-minded wretch, if I complied with it. I had only to enlarge my bribe, to change the limited sum of two thousand pounds to the unlimited offer of two thousand per annum, and no doubt might have led him with me to the extremity of obedience. However he might have demurred, however he might have doubted, however curiosity, whetted by the goadings of avarice, might have urged him to an incessant enquiry within himself as to the estimation of my character and my powers, his grasp would infallibly have chained his tongue, and secured me for his fidelity. But I could not yet prevail upon myself to endow such groveling and noxious propensities with so rich a reward. I considered in the language of anger, that the talent I possessed was of the most precious nature, and bestowed by the governor of the earth for the highest purposes; and I should have deemed it self unjustifiable in enriching by its means, however great the necessity might appear, the most worthless and ungrateful kind.

The sentiments of my tyrant varied every hour; he was restless, anxious, and undetermined; harrassed with the continual fear of losing the sum already obtained, and consumed by the whole of what was capable of being obtained.

He parted with me at last with all the pangs of a man who witnesses the ceremony of his mistress's monastic veil, and being sundered from him for ever.

Fortunatus's purse, and this was the last day he enjoyed the use of it; I was to him as the buried treasure of some long forgotten hoarder, and he feared to quit his digging before he had carried off everything that the field concealed. At length, however, he began to apprehend that he had urged the refine-

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ment of an unprincipled avarice as far as it would go; and therefore in a few days, the negro being already discharged from his penance, he suffered us to escape together.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.













